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"I became the sword by transigrating"
Story by Yuu Tanaka, Illustration by Ito

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I WAS A SWORD WHEN I REINCARNATED

– Tensei Shitara Ken Deshita –

- Volume 2 -

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**[Translated by: Ensig's Writings | Pengu |
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CHAPTER 40

POISONOUS FISH SEEM TO BE DELICIOUS

It's been 2 days since the Goblin subjugation.

We've come to the guild to look for a commission, but it's not for the money. At the moment our pockets are full, after all.

After selling off all of the Hobgoblin Horns, looted equipment, and the materials from the Beetles, we gained around 30,000 Gorudo. Considering the fact that they were materials from small fries, you could say they were sold a bit on the expensive side. Furthermore, some of the Hobgoblins' equipment included weak magic items, so those were particularly expensive.

On top of all that, we received quite the bonus for our participation in the subjugation. The standard participation reward was 30,000 Gorudo, with any bonuses amounting to ~40,000 Gorudo. Fran's special bonus was another 300,000 Gorudo on top of that.

Adding the cash we gained from selling the raw materials, our total income was ~400,000 Gorudo. Or, it *would* have been, but because we treated everyone to drinks, it decreased by 100,000. Because the other Adventurers got a nice bonus out of the subjugation, they ended up turning up in the morning to thank us.

Anyways, today's request will be for the sake of gaining experience. As a consequence of our irregular rank ups, we have insufficient experience in completing 'normal' requests. In fact, the only one would have been the commission for collecting Heal Grass.

Therefore, we decided to look for a normal request.

[The only commissions Fran can take as a Rank D are marked C, D or E Rank.]

We're no longer eligible for easy G and F Rank commissions. They wouldn't have been bad commissions to accumulate experience...

[Harvesting, escorting, patrolling the highway, and assisting in construction with magic, huh.]

"Subjugation commissions: good."

Assuredly the most convenient requests for us are subjugation commissions, but the bulletin board doesn't have any of our Rank. Are they popular?

[How about asking Ms. Nell?]

"Nn."

Luckily the lineup to the reception desk was also barren.

"Nell."

"Oh, Fran. Good day."

"Good day."

"About the recent Goblin subjugation, you played quite an important part in it, didn't you?"

"Well."

"You even ended up defeating a demon. *Waa~*, isn't that amazing~? You're cute, strong *and* lovely!"

"Thank you."

"*Kyaaaaan!* An embarrassed Fran is also cute~!"

W-When did they get so close? Unbeknownst to me who is with Fran almost 24/7, did they get together at some point? Just where the heck...?

"No subjugation commissions?"

"Ah, right now there are none, huh~ Well, to begin with, the recent Goblin stampede was an abnormal case, right? Usually, Demonic Beasts seldom appear so easily."

Of course. If hoards of Demonic Beasts appeared in the vicinity of the town resulting in subjugation commissions being emitted every day, then the daily lives of normal citizens wouldn't be possible after all.

Still... It appears that the number of Demonic Beasts in the vicinity of Aressa is even less than we thought.

"Understood."

"Ah, wait a moment. It's not a subjugation commission, but there *is* a request that you'll certainly encounter Demonic Beasts in, is that ok?"

"Where?"

"*Mh~* Wait....This one."

Hm? Investigation of the ecology of the Poisonous Swamp? 'It's possible that Demonic Beasts have settled in the swamp situated near the Forest of Starvation. Verification of their existence is needed before starting the reclamation project'?

"The area mentioned is a troublesome swamp that poisonous gas spills out of occasionally; the gas causes poison damage to any peddlers going through it."

It seems because of that, there're plans to fill up the poisonous swamp... But before sending in the workers, it's necessary to investigate whether or not there's any danger. It's especially so since there are rumors of Demonic Beasts living there, so this investigation appears to have maximum priority.

"A subjugation party would usually be sent out, but..."

"Defeating them all: OK?"

Fran, that's a death flag!

[Fran, that's no good.]

“? Don’t defeat?”

[No, I don’t mean that part, but...]

“It’s no problem if you defeat them. Rather, doing so would cut down on the labor.”

“Nn.”

It’s no use. I’ll just have to carefully pay attention.

“While you’re at it, why not take this commission as well?”

“Medical plant harvesting?”

“Right. It’s a herb called New Moon Grass, and it’s quite rare. It doesn’t grow close to the town, but if it’s close to the poisonous swamp then I think you should be able to find it.”

“Understood. I’ll take it.”

“Thanks. I pray for your good luck. Let’s meet again in the baths?”

“Nn.”

Now I see, so it was in the inn’s bath! Well, that’s good. Proactively wanting to interact with others besides me, that is.

[According to the map... The swamp’s a little ways away from where we met Randell.]

“Nn.”

[If we depart now, I get the impression that we’ll return... Probably the day after tomorrow?]

A sleeping bag, blanket, and cookware is all we brought. With that, our camping preparations were complete.



“That?”

[Looks like it.]

Around 100 meters worth of wetlands can be seen ahead of us.

We barely noticed any time passing since we left the town.

On the way here, the only enemies we met were Black Bugs and Giant Centipedes. I suppose because we having smashed their den, we didn't encounter a single Goblin.

In regards to any Demonic Beasts that leave a Dungeon prior to its defeat, after a few days their link to the Dungeon is severed. Because of that, even when the dungeon 'died', the Demonic Beast that left the Goblin Den didn't end up getting exterminated. Instead, they continued living on the outside.

And so, the moment the Dungeon got shut down all the Hobgoblins got annihilated, but the regular Goblins who had already left the dungeon should have still been roaming around here...

I guess most scattered or ran way. Even while camping, we weren't attacked even once. Needless to say, we were extremely bored.

"Smells like poison..."

[Abnormal State Resistance is set, alongside Poison Breath and Poison Absorption. There're no problems.]

"No Demonic Beasts?"

[Seems so. Yet, if they're lurking deep in the swamp it's possible that we won't be able to sense them.]

"Attacking with magic."

[*Wait, wait!* If you blow it up imprudently, then poison will end up scattered all over the place.]

The end goal of the commission is to reduce the damage coming from the poisonous swamp, so what are you thinking, trying to amplify it...?

[A way to minimize the collateral damage...]

“Fill it with Soil Magic.”

[The swamp is too big. Soil pollution is also a concern.]

Hmmm... Maybe I should try leaving Fran behind and scanning the area by myself?

“Store the swamp.”

[?]

“Dimensional Storage: absorb swamp water. Like that: Demonic Beast left bare.”

[G-Genius? Indeed, that’s a good idea.]

They wanted to reclaim the swamp anyways, so there shouldn’t be any problem. If they’re a group of people with high awareness, then they might be noisy about environmental problems or destruction of nature, but... I don’t want to hear it! Even after coming to a different world, I don’t want to care about stuff like that! That’s only to be expected, right?

[Then, I’ll be storing the swamp’s water.]

“Nn.”

This will also be a good experiment. Currently, my Dimensional Storage’s limit still isn’t in sight. Adding up all the harvested Demonic Beast materials, it should currently contain about half of a 25_m pool.

So, let’s see how much swamp water it can take. It’s quite a large swamp, and its depth also seems to be considerable, so... Its Volume must be quite immentse.

[Alright! Harvesting: start!]

Zuzuzuzuzu— —

Slowly, the water level drops.

[It... It won't stop.]

Eh? Far from the limit being reached, the swamp's water is already decreased by half and the storage still isn't getting close to full.

[... I ended up harvesting it all.]

"More space?"

[Yeah. My guess is that it's not even half-filled.]

I think that around five 25 meter pools worth got absorbed, so... Dimensional Storage is incredible.

"Lots of Demonic Beasts."

[*Hee*, those?]

"Fish."

Appearance wise, they look like cow-sized Catfish.

Race : Madness Fish : Demonic Fish : Demonic Beast Lv7

HP : 100 MP : 32

STR : 33 END : 39 AGI : 38

INT : 10 MGC : 22 DEX : 17

Skills:

Stealth Lv3, Presence Perception Lv3, Poison Secretion Lv4, Poison Resistance Lv7, Tunneling Lv3, Water Magic Lv2, Poisonous Fangs

Description:

A troublesome Demonic Beast that produces poison from its skin to kill other aquatic creatures and defend itself. Throughout history, there have been Villages that were

annihilated when one appeared in its water source. Its staple food is a peculiar seaweed that grows even in contaminated waters. Its body is exceedingly delicious. Because it is naturally endowed with Poison Resistance, its body contains no poison. Threat level E.

Magic stone location: Head, interior of the brain.

Weak. Going by its status, it's a small fry. Still, with poison related abilities and the ability to hide beneath the water's surface, it'd be quite a nuisance. Well, it was no trouble for us though.

There were 5 of them total, but they were easily dispatched and Dismantled on the spot. The muddy poisonous fish scales, poison glands and poison fangs were stripped off immediately.

The body appears as though it'd be delicious, and from the bones a Dashi could be made. Fish dishes can now be added to our cooking repertoire.

[With this, the commission is complete. Next is collecting medical plants, so let's finish it quick and return.]

CHAPTER 41

OTHERWORLDLY COOKING

It's now been 7 days since the Goblin subjugation

It's late at night, and we're in the inn's kitchen.

As promised to Fran, I'm here to cook her some food. Since the sight of a lightly floating sword cooking would certainly cause a commotion, Fran is here with me too.

The cooks said "If it's late at night after the Dining Room is closed, then there's no problem", so we've properly received permission. With this, I'll give my all at cooking!

[Chan Chan Chara Chachacharara~]

"Chanchan?"

[Chanchara, Chan Chan Chan~]

"?"

[Welcome! It's time for Otherworldly Cooking!]

"Oh~~?"

Not understanding the meaning of my words yet still guessing the mood, Fran started clapping.

[The first meal today is... This!]

"Meat?"

[Correct! Prepared for you today is minced meat from Rock Bison and Crash Boar: 30_{kg} of each!]

Moreover, Rune Tulip bulbs that resemble onions, Golden Chicken eggs, breadcrumbs, and all sorts of spices were also prepared.

[Then, knead this Fran.]

“Nn.”

[You should make use of what you have, right?]

“With this: able to eat Teacher’s cooking every day.”

[Considering your Titles, you should also be able to make good dishes.]

“Can’t make what I don’t know.”

[Ah, that’s right after all.]

What Fran wants to eat is Earth’s cooking, and no one but me can make that. Even if similar cooking is possible, in the end the degree of refinement would end up different.

So, with that I went on to chop the Rune Tulip bulbs. For the sake of cutting them into fine pieces, I’ve decided to use Aura • Blade.

So far, I had used myself after taking a thorough wash through boiling and purification magic, but... Still, I had used Demonic Poison Fang for slaying Demonic Beasts earlier, so a bit of anxiety still remains. Until now Fran’s shown no sign of bad conditions, but that doesn’t necessarily mean it’s safe.

The finely chopped Rune Tulips were carefully stir-fried in the frying pan.

[Mix together the minced meats, then make an onion-shaped ball. After that, add spices and keep on mixing.]

“Leave it to me.”

I also mixed the remaining minced meat with Telekinesis. When that was completed, 60_{kg} worth of special-hamburger base was completed.

Honestly, I had a feeling that I went overboard, but... When it’s put into Dimensional Storage it won’t go bad, so it’s fine.

[Now let's start grilling the hamburgers.]

"Nn."

Even using an enormous oven with Magic to shorten the process, it couldn't be done in one go.

[In the meantime, the next step is to cut up all of these vegetable-like ingredients and put them into a stew.]

"Nn."

[Then, I'll also begin cutting.]

The ingredients besides Demonic Beast flesh were arranged plentifully.

Affected by the ambiance of the town market, I now realize that I may have gotten a bit carried away. After following my instincts, I got completely swept up in buying ingredients... A large earthenware pot of Miso and Soy Sauce alongside a giant bag of spices were also bought. After that, several super-extra-large sized pots got purchased.

Because of that, another 100,000_{Gorudo} ended up being used. Ha... Hahaha...

— No, it was for the sake of making delicious meals for Fran, so it was necessary!

[Now we add some water... And next, we'll throw in the spices.]

I added heat with Magic while using Telekinesis and Magic to shred the vegetables like a mixer. When finished, it was a specially-made demi-glace. It smelt good, to say the least.

After that, tomato sauce, consomme soup, chicken bouillon and so forth were also made. At this point I've started instructing Fran on the ways to use the ingredients.

“Guro, guro.”

[Mhm. Keep stirring, just like that.]

Around the time the third batch of hamburgers were cooked, all the soup and sauces were completed.

Good, good. If there are matching seasonings at the market, then I’m able to make any cuisine!

I cover the hamburgers in demi-glace sauce and toss them into Dimensional Storage one after another. The plan is to have them available regardless of the time and place while still steaming hot.

In the same way, tomato juice and japanese ponzu flavored ones were made. Tyrant Tiger Stew, Deep Fried Blast Turtle, Dopples Snake Kabayaki, Fried Stone Spider, Stewed Rock Bison Tongue, Ginger Air-grilled Crash Boar, Sausages, Bacon, Jerky, Meat Miso and other such dishes were completed as well.

[Alright. The meat dishes are almost finished.]

“Nn!”

Before long, dawn broke. We’ll end here today and continue tomorrow.



And so, we’re once again in the kitchen.

Today we’ll be doing fish-based cooking. — Well, even if I say that, I don’t have any fish ingredients other than the Madness Fish meat. I think I’ll turn it into Nitsuke, Shiroyaki and Tempura.

I also considered making some into Meunière, but as expected a Japanese should eat Japanese cuisine! Er... Not that I’d be eating it, of course.

Ah, by the way, about the poisonous swamp: it seems that our actions turned into some sort of ghost story about a suddenly-vanishing poisonous swamp. Ms. Nell knew that we did something, but it seems that she wasn't the type of person who would spread that information to other Adventurers. Maybe we overdid it...

Oops, while thinking the Nitsuke finished. It's got a good color to it.

Well, that's about all for the main cooking, but we're not finished yet.

Next are the side dishes. Let's start off with soups. We'll be re-using the soup-like things made yesterday, but this time we'll fine-tune them with salt and pepper as well as throw in some other ingredients. A Consomme Soup with Sausages... Wouldn't that be delicious?

Furthermore, making use of the Madness Fish bones, the Chinese Fish Dashi Soup was also completed.

Of course, I didn't forget about Salad and Stir-Fried Vegetables either. The nutritional balance has to be enforced with an iron grip with Fran in her growth period. Related to that, her current state is quite worrying. Lately she's gotten somewhat better-rounded, but compared to the other kids in town she still looks feeble. Furthermore, it feels like her height is little short... Meals are important, no matter what.

"Nn?"

[No, it's nothing. Next are the staple foods.]

Somehow, I had made light of Aressa's market, as today I found myself surprised that even Rice was sold there. In this area, the Northern and Southern regions appear to meet, so Rice and Wheat-based items are both eaten.

The Rice is cooking quietly, in several earthenware pots we bought for its sake.

Of course, flour is also being made use of. Udon, Bread, Naan and Okonomiyaki, all such carbohydrate-parade foods were around. Bread could be found in the standard baguette type, but there were also the rectangular type that Japanese people love.

We also made Chinese Noodles, since Lye Water was also at the market.

I don't think that any mistakes were made when kneading the noodles, since the process of making them went well because of the strange water. And so, Ramen, Yakisoba, and more could be made.

Now, since we have rice and Naan... *That* has to be made.

[Well then, next I was thinking of making a special dish.]

"Special?"

Hey, hey, your expectations are a bit too high if your eyes are gleaming like that... Well, I guess I'll just need to do by best, huh?

"What is it?"

[It's a special-hyper-ultra dish! Its name is — **Curry!**]

"*Kuuree?* What is it?"

[*Fufufufu.* Well, you'll see.]

Curry was my favorite food back on Earth. Here, I don't eat — not even a single sign of appetite has shown up thus far. But the feeling of wanting Fran to eat delicious food is there instead. Therefore: Curry needs to be made. We can't go on without it.

[Break the spices like this.]

"Beautiful."

[It's for the sake of making a delicious curry.]

"Cook it?"

[Right. While blending it, you keep on cooking.]

“Hmmm.”

One hour later, 3 business sized pots filled to the brim with curry sit in front of us.

In the beginning, we finished with just a normal sized pot. Spices are expensive, after all.

However, after Fran taste tested the first batch, she kept on eating it at a dreadful pace. In the blink of an eye, we ran out. Afterwards, upon Fran’s continuous demands, all of the remaining spices were put towards making curry in vast amounts.

Sweet, mild, and scathing flavors were made, and the vegetables and meat were altered to fit. Even if I say so myself, they’re masterpieces. If we took them to Japan, I have absolute confidence that it would sell.

“I was born to meet this dish.”

[You like it that much?!]

“Thanks Teacher.”

[That feels like the most emotion-loaded “Thanks” I’ve received up until now...]

I have to make sure that Fran doesn’t eat only Curry from now on...

Counting all the dishes made in these 2 days, ~2000 portions should have been made. In other words, we’ve made over 1 year’s worth of food. However, contrary to her appearance Fran is a big eater, so the chances that it’ll disappear sooner than that is quite high.

Well, with this there won’t be any concerns about meals for a while at least.

“For now: second serving of curry.”

[But you just ate...]

“Please.”

[... It can't be helped. Only one more serving, alright?]

“Nn!”

Fran exercises properly, so just one more shouldn't hurt... Right?

CHAPTER 42

REGARDING THE FUTURE AND SUCH

It's now been 10 days since the Goblin subjugation.

This morning, we returned after what seemed like a long time to Gallus' shop. As usual, merchants had intense looks in their eyes while they loitered around his store.

"Afternoon."

"Well, if it isn't little miss and Teacher! It's been a while! What can I help you with today?"

[First things first, how's the armor coming along?]

"*Gahaha!* It's going fine! When you see it, you'll definitely be surprised!"

"Looking forward."

"So, did you only come to ask for an update?"

[No. Actually, we wanted a bit of advice —]

I explain to the old man how I grow stronger as Magic Sword through absorbing Magic Stones. Since Gallus hadn't leaked the fact that I was an Intelligent Weapon, he seemed like a trustworthy fellow.

"I see, so you had that type of ability... And, essentially, you're wondering whether it's alright for others to know or not?"

[Uh-huh. So, what do you think?]

"Hmm... I think you'd better not."

"As expected: unusual."

"Got that right. I've heard of large scale Magical Tools having similar traits, but for a sword to have such ability... It's the first I've heard of it."

So my abilities were something that even a famous Blacksmith hasn't heard of? In that

case, it's definitely not on the level of a normal person's knowledge...

"As expected. Teacher: amazing."

"A bit *too* amazing. Intelligent Weapons aren't unheard of, but one that can grow by absorbing Magic Stones — and even gets skills through them to boot... It'd be easy to see something like that being labeled as a Divine Sword."

Divine Swords: equipment of legends. The ones that exist are undoubtedly super weapons. Compared to me, they're on a whole different level of might.

"A single Divine Sword can easily influence the military balance between Nations, you know."

[It's at that level?]

"Aye. Even though my knowledge only covers 5 of them, each one has unbelievable legends associated with 'em.

Being the origin of the 'Divine Sword' title, the first divine sword: Alpha.

Achieving fame in a war which ruined entire Countries, the divine sword that brings abnormal mentality to its wielder: Berserk.

Having served a single horseman to kill an army measuring 30,000 strong, the Battle-Horse sword: Chariot.

Considered to have sealed the Demon King itself, the Demon King's sword: Diablos.

And then, the sword of flame that we've already spoken about before: Ignis.

In addition to those, there're several other Divine Swords. Almost all of them have stories of mass-slaughter, and end with sites of great destruction in the end."

"Divine Swords: amazing."

"Well, there's always some exaggerations mixed in with their tales, but without a doubt they're on completely different levels. Of course, every Nation keeps their blades' locations a secret, and the whereabouts of the Divine-Class Master Blacksmith(s) who forged the Divine Swords is completely unknown. Whether they're still alive, or if a new Divine Class Blacksmith was born... Anything related to them is

unknown.”

“Why?”

“That’s the question, isn’t it. Maybe they didn’t want to be used by governments and hid, or... Maybe they’re being sheltered by the Gods. There’re lots of rumors, but the truth is unknown. It’s for that reason that each Nation keeps an iron grip on the Divine Swords that they know of.”

[So, they’re existences of that magnitude, huh...?]

“Right. If by any chance the information that you’re a Divine Sword spread... No doubt people would come to steal you for the sake of acquiring your strength. And it wouldn’t be some small number, either. It wouldn’t even matter if you were *actually* a true one or not; in such peoples’ eyes, it’d be fine to steal first and verify later. After that, they’d test you out to measure your ability.”

Whether it’s entire Nations or simply individuals, Divine Swords are certain to be aimed at by many.

“Even if their opponent wields a Divine Sword: surprise attacks, poisoning... There’re always ways to give themselves an edge. Since your wielder is the little miss, some might turn to ‘sweeter’ forms of persuasion, but...”

[In the end, it’s better to keep my abilities hidden.]

“You ought to do that. I’m happy that you came to open up to me, but make sure you don’t become careless and get discovered from now on, alright?”

The risk gained from revealing my abilities is far too large. For now, let’s keep it a secret.



After departing from old man Gallus’, we went to the Guild to turn in our commissions as per usual. We were doing well day after day — would be something I say

tentatively, but it's a fact that we've been steadily piling up completed commissions. There was nothing else to do, after all.

"Today: also disappointed."

[There was nothing besides insects, after all.]

"No consistency when chewed."

[On this side, I've only gained 7 points in Magic Stone Value in these 10 days...]

Commissions like 'harvesting' or 'investigating' are nice, but our desired Experience Points and Magic Stone Value aren't being gathered at all.

[Fran is Level 25 now, right?]

"Nn."

[Then... From now on, it'd be best not thinking that you'll be leveling up as fast as you used to.]

"Next: dungeons?"

[Haunts, probably.]

According to the rumors we've heard, Haunts have Demonic Beasts in high numbers, just like Dungeons. It's for that reason that they're known as "Boundaries of Demons", after all.

Maokami Plains also falls under that category. I think above 90% of the creatures there were Demonic Beasts, after all.

That being said, I'd prefer not going back there. Not only is there the fact that we'd have to get close to the Forest of Starvation, but it also appears that the Threat Level in the plains skyrocketed since I left.

Around the time we came to town, the Adventurers made an investigation of Maokami Plains — as to keep an eye on the turf war between large scale Demonic Beast. The reports filed to result of said investigation confirmed the presence of several Rank B

Demonic Beasts.

During the time I was there, neither shadows nor figures of such beings were present. However, when talking about Demonic Beasts, even without breeding they can be produced spontaneously when magic power coagulates. Most likely, the Demonic Beast that showed up were born like that.

If that's the case, then after I departed, Rank B Demonic Beast were born...

— Really close!

If they had been born any earlier, I might not be here now. Or rather, that fact is almost certain.

There's even the possibility of an A Rank existing there, so the reconnaissance team's main body is still in the middle of continuing the survey. Because the danger is high in the Plains itself, they're supposedly observing from inside of the Forest of Starvation. Staying in that forest for a prolonged period: thanks, but no thanks.

Anyways, an A Rank, huh... For such a being to have come into existence... Saying that the Plain is an A Rank Haunt gives me a bad feeling, but I can agree with it. Or rather, I should probably count my lucky stars that the Demonic Beasts were weaker while I was there.

“Then: dungeon delving after all?”

[That's also possible.]

However, our taking down the Demon in this last Dungeon was largely due to luck. If the Demon was cool-headed and came to finish us off at long range, then we would have had to flee without being able to do anything.

[Let's not challenge Demon bosses if we come across any. We might be able to handle weaker ones, though.]

Hm... From now on, we should collect information on Dungeons and Haunts. We can't leave the town before receiving the armor from Gallus anyways.

(Check up on dungeon info?)

[Mh. Let's pass the rest of the day doing that.]

We'll have time to spare no matter what we do, so let's take our time searching the Guild's reference room for today.

In the second floor of the Guild is a room dedicated to books and documents. I can't really imagine many Adventurers reading documents as part of their preparations, but there seem to be some people here and there. They're all Scouts or Mages. Different from the muscle brains responsible for the vanguard, they came to search for information on their commissions, I guess.

One can really see the sorrows of the intellectual Adventurers up here.

"Oho. Is this your first time here, missy?"

"Nn."

"Then, let me take a look see at your Adventurer Card."

At the Reference Room's reception desk sits an old man with a small build. He's bald with a white beard that reaches his chest, and his eyebrows have grown to the degree of hiding his eyes entirely. Even if he's wearing a classy robe, I can only think of him as a hermit.

[He brings quite the pointless ambiance...]

"*Hoho*, so *you're* the rumored Magic-Sword Girl, eh?"

"Rumored?"

"That's right! Lately, you've become quite the talk, missy. Because of that I immediately recognized ya!"

So rumors have started to spread, huh. Well... There's not much that can be done about us standing out like a sore thumb at this point. Judging by the old man's response, the rumors don't seem to be bad at least.

"I'm Shuuren, and this here reference room is managed by me."

"Nn."

"Taking documents outta here is forbidden, but transcribe 'em all you like. A single parchment is 300_{Gorudo}, and you can loan a pen for 30_{Gorudo} per hour."

Paper is quite expensive... Well, information is valuable in the long run, after all.

After buying one sheet of parchment, we start searching for the desired documents. Since Shuuren showed us where the documents were whenever we asked, finding things was quite easy.

The first thing we looked for was a map of the continent.

Taking a look at it, we're currently in the Jylbard Continent. Its form seemed close to a caltrop. It's probably around the size of Africa, but that's just conjecture. In the first place, it's questionable whether or not the map is accurate.

The town of Aressa belongs to a Kingdom called Kranzell, and it's located in the Western part of the caltrop-like Jylbard Continent. I didn't know until now, but if you went West for ~5 days from here, you'd probably be able to reach the sea.

[So, places with Dungeons close to Aressa include... Iluuf and Urmuut.]

Iluuf is in a neighboring country to the North, and belongs to the Belios Kingdom. If we can't cross the border, then no matter how much we struggle there's no way we'd be able to reach it.

On the other hand, Urmut lays South of Aressa, and also belongs to the Kranzell Kingdom, so there shouldn't be much trouble with entering it.

(Both have dungeons.)

[Ilлуuf has one C Rank Dungeon.]

(Urmut: two D Rank Dungeons.)

So, do we take quality or quantity? *Hmm...* I personally think that Urmut would be the best choice. There wouldn't be any problems regarding borders, and it's probably best to accumulate experience in lower ranked Dungeons first.

[So, which one?]

(Urmut. Warm up with D Ranks first.)

[I also agree. Then, let's keep researching. This time, let's aim for information regarding the Dungeons of Urmut.]

"Nn."

After that, we should find the route we'll be taking to get there, and any stops we should take along the way. There appears to be both a land and a sea route, too.

[By sea or by land... Which would be better, I wonder?]

(Land route would be easier.)

[That's true. By the way... Have you ever been on a ship Fran?]

(Once, as a slave. Was kept crammed at the bottom.)

Somehow... I'm sorry. Or rather, that's her only memory of a boat trip! That's no good! No way that can stay like that!

[I-Is that so. Well then, how about this time we enjoy ourselves on the sea route?]

(Enjoy?)

[Ou. Traversing the sea on a boat is enjoyable. There're also delicious marine products to be had.]

(... Fish?)

[There'd also be Shrimp, Lobster, Crab, and other shellfish too. There's a great variety.]

(Nn. No choice but the sea route, then.)

So it's for food in the end... Well, with that we've decided in favor of the sea route.



“N—n...”

Fran stretched out over the table. It seems that her body has gotten stiff from sitting for so long... Probably. We've been in the Reference Room for 2 hours straight, after all.

[Then, the things we should research later would be...]

(Nn. Urmut's delicacies.)

[Well, there's that too, but there are also other things to investigate, you know...]

Passenger fees, plans for our exact route, and so on.

(Right. Those too.)

[... Do you really understand?]

(Can't go without investigating specialities.)

[Ah... Oh well.]

CHAPTER 43

WHAT OCCURRED

We're walking towards the exit of Aressa.

We've taken a simple commission again today while searching for some Demonic Beasts. You could also say that there was nothing else to do besides this.

"Yo! Another commission today?"

"Nn."

One of the gatekeepers — Dert — calls out to us as we leave. He was the person who admitted us when we first arrived at this town. Thinking about it, we've formed a pretty good relationship with this uncle. We pass by almost every day and Fran stands out, so I suppose it was only a matter of time. He's a nice person. Even to the unsociable Fran, he tries to talk to her every day.

A guardsman showing a different reaction to Fran's unsociable-and-sour impression at first glance would be understandable, but Dert seems a bit soft. Testament to their relationship building, Fran's lowered her guard a little.

"Cute, as always."

... Isn't this guy just a lolicon?

"That reminds me, are you acquainted with Viscount Alsund?"

"?"

[He's talking about *that* guy. The noble who came complaining to the Guild.]

"Ah. Small-Fry Vice Commander."

To Fran's words, Dert was momentarily astonished before proceeding to laugh.

"*Hahahaha!* Yeah, yeah, that's the one."

"What about him?"

"Ah, for some reason it looks like he's searching for little Fran. It'd be best to be careful. Yesterday, some fellow calling himself the guy's subordinate came here to check if you passed through."

Hooh. How suspicious.

"Since he's a noble, he does whatever he pleases in the town... Even more, he seems to have a skill to see through lies."

"I know."

In reality, he *had* the Skill to see through lies. Now, *I* have that ability.

"So, about that Skill: in the world of nobles it's something of a godsend. Giving its user the ability to grasp their opponent's weakness, and allowing quick dispersion of political opponents... Those guys, telling lies is as easy as breathing for them, after all."

Mr. Dert, I must say, you're my kind of guy. The type of guy who holds prejudice against nobles!

"Because he has that Skill, even if that Viscount causes trouble his parents crush any complains. And because of that, he got excessively carried away and became prone to doing foolish things. Those actions extend to little Fran as well, so I have no idea what he might want with you."

"Understood. I'll be careful."

"Good to hear. Ah, also on the subject of the Viscount, I caught wind of a slightly dangerous rumor."

"Rumor?"

"Mhm, it's from a few days back. It seems that Viscount Alsund's state has started to

become... *Odd.*"

"How so?"

"Well, he abruptly began acting suspiciously. Just when rumors started appearing stating that he might be becoming mentally ill he committed a terrible fault in the company of Royalty. I don't know the full details, but apparently his family was enraged — there were even talks this was the last time he wouldn't be forsaken. Thereafter, it's just been getting worse and worse. Various rumors like 'he's been cursed' or 'he's been possessed by the Evil God' are flying about."

Uwaa, and that guy might be stalking us? That's scary.

"Well, anyways. Take care!"

"Nn."

Our commission today is to harvest New Moon Grass. Since Fran still remembers where it grows, we should be able to complete it no problem. While we're at it, we plan on seeing how the development of the Poisonous Swamp is going. If things go well, we'll find a couple of Demonic Beasts along the way.



A short time after advancing on the highway, we sensed a couple of presences.

(Teacher.)

[Yeah. We're being followed.]

The number of people tailing us is two. One is amateurish — he isn't hiding his presence or anything. It's completely laid bare.

We slowly change our course off of the highway, and as we do so the presences follow after us. As expected, we're being pursued.

Like that, we advance for a short while into the forest, and allow the presences to close

in.

“O-Oy! Stop *right* there!”

From behind, an angry voice is heard. To be lured here unawares... He’s truly praise worthy.

“That’s... Small-Fry Vice Commander?”

[Viscount Augusto, right?]

So, Dert’s warning came true. The one besides him is probably a subordinate or something... But somehow, he doesn’t give off the impression of a Knight. Anyways, for Augusto, at first glance you wouldn’t be able to know that it was him. It’s just to that extent that he’s changed.

His cheeks are collapsed inwards, with bloodshot eyes and untidied hair which was falling out at certain points. He was going bald from misery... It’s an appearance that wouldn’t be out of place in a horror movie as a vengeful ghost. Erm... He didn’t become an Undead, right?

Just what happened to him in these 10 days? He was a sickening fellow, sure, but when I see him in this state I end up feeling a bit sympathetic.

“Y... Y— ... You!”

Uwaa... He’s drawing near...

“I’ve c-come to take c-compensation f-for... The *r-rudeness* you committed against me in the *G-Guild*!”

That’s quite sudden. Without any introductions, he’s abruptly started shouting. Since he’s doing so after such a transformation, I have a bad hunch.

“Who might you be?”

“W-What? Are you saying that you have... **F-Forgotten** myself?!”

“It’s our first time meeting.”

“T-Truly? *N-No*, don’t lie! There’s no way that’s—”

“Truly Truly. Mistaken for someone else.”

It seems Fran doesn’t want to get involved. Has he really fallen this much? No... That shouldn’t be enough to deceive him. Right?

“*Eh?* It’s... Truly a misunderstanding? No — it’s a lie! A... *Lie*... Right?”

“Not a lie. Truth.”

“*Eh? Eh?* It’s not a lie after all? It’s really not?”

Maybe he’s believing it because he’s gone a bit loopy? There’d be no way he could believe that otherwise... Will Fran actually get away with this?

That’s what I thought, but...

“*Ah!* T-That Sword! A-After all, you *are* the beastgirl from the Guild!?”

Sorry Fran. Because of me, he noticed.

“A-After all, it was a lie, right?! *Shit*... Everybody keeps telling me nothing but lies... !”

You don’t say!

“T-That sword, g-give it here!”

“No.”

“**S-Shut up!** F-filthy Adventurers like you shouldn’t defy **N-Nobles!** H-Hand it over!”

“Don’t want to.”

“I-I-I’m the one who decides that! Me! Auguste Alsund^[i]!”

Augusto clawed the nails of his right hand into head, scratching and tearing away at his skin. Hair quickly falls and blood trickles down his forehead in response. Yet, even with that he doesn’t snap out of his eccentric behavior. Now, he’s started to scratch his head with *both* hands.

“? Gone mad?”

How troublesome. While consulting Fran about whether we should flee or kill, his subordinate steps forward.

“Now, now, Sir Auguste. Leave this to me.”

“*Gu-gununu...*”

“I’ll only punish them a bit.”

“Is t-that so? T-Then I’ll leave it to you. *Hihihhi.*”

What an unpleasant face to laugh with... Since his mind seems to have snapped, there’s just no way to go about fixing him, huh?

“And so: hand over the magic sword. That’s an order from the Viscount.”

“No way.”

“*Kukuku...* Rather than resorting to violence, quickly handing it over is better for you, don’t you think?”

“T-That’s r-right! Gyuran is a master Mercenary!”

“Understand that? If you do, hand over the sword.”

“Not. A. Chance.”

“*Tsk.* Shitty brat, don’t get all conceited, a’right! Can’t you e’en comprehend th’ difference in our abilities?”

Well, let's just see how strong this gum-flapping Gyuran really is.

Name : Gyuran Age : 34

Race : Blue Cat Beastman

Job : Mercenary

State : Normal

Status:

Level : 31

HP : 168 MP : 136

STR : 78 END : 81 AGI : 118

INT : 70 MGC : 60 DEX : 81

Skills:

Intimidation : Lv3, Danger Perception : Lv3, Archery : Lv2, Strong Presence Perception : Lv5, Sword Techniques : Lv5, Sword Arts : Lv6, Shield Arts : Lv4, Instantaneous Movement : Lv3, Commerce : Lv3, Spear Arts : Lv3, Dagger Arts : Lv3, Threaten : Lv3, Capture : Lv3, Paralysis Resistance : Lv3, Vigor Manipulation, Pain Reduction, AGI ↑, Directional Sense, Night Eyes

Titles:

None

Equipment:

Illusionary Pyroxene Magic Sword, Dagger of the Sovereign Serpent, Leather Armor of the Blaze Lion, Shoes of the Hundred-Eyed Skink, Shield of the Black Stone Tree, Gauntlets of the Lesser Dragon, Hidden Claw Necklace, Bracelet of Protection, Bracelet of Poison Resistance

So-so, I guess? He's not a small fry, but he's not powerful by any means. As a 'master mercenary', he's quite lacking.

"Hm? You... Are you a Black Cat?"

"..."

"My *esteemed* self is from the Blue Cat Tribe. Could it be that you detest me?"

“Blue Cat Tribe: the enemy.”

Fran gives off a strong feeling of hostility as those words leave her mouth.

[Fran? What is going on?]

(Blue Cat Tribe: have lots of slave merchants. Black marketeers as well.)

[Like the ones who caught Fran...?]

This man might also be related to such things. He has Commerce, Threaten and Capture after all.

(Mhm. Around 300 years ago: the Blue Cat Tribe started becoming slave traders. Tricked members of the Black Cat tribe. Made into slaves and sold.)

[‘Tricked’?]

(Blue Cat tribe pretended to be friendly, then launched a surprise attack. Many of the Black Cat tribe: caught and sold. Appealed to the King of the Beastmen, but because of status: couldn’t receive an audience.)

What a despicable story... I’ll remember it. The Blue Cat Tribe consists of slave traders. Fran’s enemy is my enemy. In other words, that guy is my enemy.

“What’s with you, finally going silent? Are ya trembling? Well, it’s too late now *kahaha*. You’ll have to experience a bit of pain: lament your own recklessness! I won’t give you any big wounds, though. You’d be unable to be turned into merchandise if I did!”

[He’s completely guilty. This fellow is definitely connected to the black market slave dealers.]

(Nn.)

The man drew his blades, both of which were clad in magical power. They seem to be somewhat strong.

Name : Illusionary Pyroxene Magic Sword
ATK : 650 MP : 200 Durability : 600
Magic Power Conductivity • B
Skills :
Illusionary Attack

Name : Dagger of the Sovereign Serpent
ATK : 373 MP : 100 Durability : 700
Magic Power Conductivity • C+
Skills :
Sovereign Toxic Fang

(All over his body: magic tools?)

[Yeah, looks like it.]

(Then, take?)

[Using Dimensional Storage?]

Wouldn't harvesting the opponent's equipment during battle be effective? We'd been thinking so for a while now, — No, actually, we only noticed we could recently.

Originally, we tried various things to test the power of the Dimensional Storage. Tests to see if the passage of time *truly* stopped, or if the temperature *really* didn't change among others. The results of our investigation showed that the raw materials didn't rot, and foods stayed piping hot. After testing regularly, we came to the conclusion that time really stopped.

In the middle of such tests, we suddenly came up with the idea of stealing equipment from opponents. Since we had only been fighting Demonic Beasts there was no chance to try it out, but... The perfect opponent has arrived.

"Oh? You got the guts for it, lil' girl?"

Fran unsheathes me... And Gyuran falls to the ground.

“—Huh?”

“First: bracelets.”

“AAAAAAAAAAAH!”

Moving to his side in an instant, Gyuran’s arms both fall to Fran’s feet. On each arm was a magic bracelet.

(Teacher: harvesting went well?)

[Y-Yeah.]

No mercy for enemies, right? Or rather, it seems that her actions are slightly more severe than usual, with a calm anger resonating around her. Towards the screaming Gyuran, Fran’s eyes grow dark as she pushes me against the bracelets. With that, Dimensional Storage invoked.

“Sword, too.”

I retrieve the fallen sword without issue. It seems that I can harvest things so long as they’re separated from the wielder’s hand.

“W-Why?! According to my Skill, she shouldn’t be this strong — O-Only my life, pleaaaaaah!”

Skills? This guy can talk quite well despite being in such a state... Ah, come to think of it, he had a Pain Reduction Skill. Is it thanks to that? Now, what were his other skills again...? Ahh, I see, he was talking about Strong Presence Perception!

Strong Presence Perception

Allows the user to perceive the difference in Levels between themselves and others.

So, it's because of this Skill that he figured Fran's Level was below his. A member of the Black Cat tribe with a lower level, and a young girl on top of that. In his eyes, there must have been plenty to make light of.

Hmm... Besides Strong Presence Perception, AGI ↑ is a good skill, but... Skill Taker can't be reused in the end. As expected, it's absolutely necessary to think before we use it. Hopefully a good opponent will arrive in front of us while Skill Taker is usable.

"Attempt harvesting again. Armor?"

"H-Hiii—!"

Zaku

I jab into the shoulder of the man who is trying to flee by crawling away.

"I-It huuurts!"

Even if he has Pain Reduction, there's no way this would remain painless in the end. While thinking so I invoke Dimensional storage, but...

[I can't harvest it. It appears that it's not possible to take anything that the other party is wearing.]

How disappointing. If it was possible, it would have been quite useful during combat.

(Then... If the wielder dies it'll work?)

[Well, that's right, but... I'll do it, so —]

(Nn-nn. It's alright. I will.)

Uttering so, Fran swings me down without hesitation.

“Ag— kahyuu—.....”

With the nape of his neck cut, the sound of air escaping his lungs releases from his lips. As his life fades, he squirms slightly, moving what remains of his arms midair... *And dies.* Not quick enough.

[Are you alright?]

(Would have been experienced eventually. This guy as the first: good luck.)

For having killed a person with her own hands for the first time, she's quite calm. Perhaps it was because he was a bitter enemy of her tribe, or maybe it was because he was a scoundrel?

Well, the Mental Stability Skill might also be showing its effect. It's a skill that lowers the mental hurdle towards killing, so... It's good that she obtained it before this experience.

Anyways, I can rationalize it all I'd like, but it'd be best to ignore it for now. So long as Fran doesn't end up troubled for no reason, then it's fine. I never liked hesitant protagonists anyways. To get depressed every single time they kill an enemy is nothing but irritating.

[Then, let's harvest it at once!]

“Nn.”

[First, the armor!]

Armor, Boots, Dagger, Shield, Gauntlets, Necklace, one by one they get harvested.

“Hihihihiiii!”

It was uncertain whether it was a laugh or a scream that was raised as Small-Fry Vice Commander Auguste fell on his backside.

“Ri... Ri-Ridiculous! H-He was the hero of the Ruze War! T-To defeat the slaughterer of a thousand men, that superhuman, this easily...!”

He really was completely fooled... Slaughterer of a thousand men? That's just too laughable. Besides, this Gyuran: a Hero? No way. Anyone with even a *speck* of human intellect could realize that. It's difficult to believe that someone would fall for such a lie.

No, maybe... Is this my fault? Since I stole Law of Lies, has he become unable to distinguish truth from lies?

(Teacher's fault.)

[*Eh...* So it is, after all...]

(Nn. Good job.)

[Ah, you were praising me.]

She's harsh on those she's showed hostility to, as usual.

W-Well, you reap what you sow. It's just his bad luck that he picked a quarrel with us. Right. I'm not at fault. Nope.

“A-And Gyuran's equipment, w-where did it go?! I-I bought that as a present — it's the highest grade of armor!”

You really were an easy mark, huh. After being inspired with a bunch of lies, you easily opened your wallet. How pitiful.

[Hey, what should we do about him?]

(..... Ignore.)

[*Hmm*. Is that alright?]

For now, I guess we'll just focus on harvesting Gyuran's corpse. If it's left alone, it seem that he could become an undead, after all. It's a bother to have to dispose of it, but it can't be helped.

While we're at it, I take the ~20,000 Gorudo he had on him, too. Can't let anything go to waste, right?

Now, how should we deal with Auguste... Arrest him? Kill him? Ignore him? Brainwash him?

While being troubled about how to approach the issue, a new presence appeared, closing in on our location.

(Teacher...!)

[Ah, it's got quite the amount of magical power. It might just reach Threat Level D! Be careful!]

"Nn!"

CHAPTER 44

AFTER WHAT OCCURRED

(Teacher...!)

[Ah, it's got quite the amount of magical power. It might just reach Threat Level D! Be careful!]

"Nn!"

Despite my approximation, whatever's approaching has a *peculiar* magical power. It's not the same as a Demonic Beast's, Human's, or... Well, *anything's*. Really, it's quite a strange magic power.

And that enigmatic presence is coming towards us at frightening speed. Perhaps it's aiming at Fran? No, the idiot Viscount still counts as a Noble, so maybe he's the target?

Well, anyway, this is no time to be careless.

"W-Why is your sword still drawn?! D-Do you intend to kill me?!"

For some reason Auguste is being noisy. Thinking about it, it'd be bothersome if he became a hindrance during the fight, so let's have him be quiet for now. Lv3 Dark Magic: [Mind • Lost]. It's a spell that steals the target's consciousness, causing them to faint. My guess is that this guy won't have any resistance.

"Ah.....?"

thmp

Moving the collapsed Viscount to the side, we remain waiting for a few tens of seconds, and what showed itself was a strange half-translucent thing. How to describe it... It's like a water sphere that keeps winding and changing its form while floating in the air.

“Miss Fran, you haven’t killed him, right?”

“?”

Suddenly, it started talking. Wait, it’s not guaranteed that it’s *actually* talking, as there isn’t any evidence of it having a mouth — let alone a face. Still, I *think* that it’s talking. Its voice seems familiar, too.

“Guild Master?”

“That’s right. Ah, is this your first time seeing one of these? This is one of the kinds of Spirits I use. Please, be at ease.”

“Spirit... First time seeing one.”

It’s also my first time coming across something like this. How should I say this... It’s a bit different from what I imagined. I had thought that Spirits would have a more humanoid appearance — something like a Sylph or an Undine.

It seems Fran was thinking along similar lines.

“Somehow, strange”

“What is strange! To call it strange... This child is an Intermediate level Spirit, therefore it has no human appearance. However, this child is also cute by all means you know!]

“Cuter ones: better.”

“The ones with humanoid appearances are Superior Spirits. There is no *way* someone would summon such a being for anything other than combat.”

Ah, so Spirits with humanoid appearance are Superior Spirits. Furthermore, the Guild Master is able to summon ones like that. This one’s only an Intermediate level, but it already has a lot of magical power, so just how powerful would a superior one be, I wonder?

If he can have several Spirits summoned simultaneously, then he’s quite the force to

be reckoned with... The Guild Master is already tremendously strong all by himself, so with the addition of Spirits, wouldn't it be a bit out of hand? Well, I guess that's to be expected from a Guild Master.

"What did you want?"

"Oops, that's right. I received information that Viscount Auguste left the town chasing after you."

That only just happened... He has some pretty good ears.

"The gatekeeper, Sir Dert, kindly notified me. It was something along the lines of 'Viscount Auguste went out chasing after her, will she be alright?'."

Dert, I'm sorry for having thought that you might be a lolicon. You were just a good person.

"Nn. He appeared."

"As I thought! An appeal to the Guild came in about securing the Viscount behind the scenes. You didn't kill him, right? Right? Erm, maybe you *accidentally* killed him? That sure would be troublesome!"

"Didn't kill."

"R-Really? Good! Then, I'd like to take him off your hands. Of course, you won't be handing him over for free."

"Okay."

"Really? Thank you! Well then, I will immediately make my way towards your location, so could you guard him for the time being?"

"Nn."

"Then, excuse me!"

At with the Guild Master's words, the Spirit's figure disappeared. It seems that it was used in place of a messenger.

10 minutes later, the figure of the Guild Master appeared. Pretty fast. Seem like he put quite a bit of effort into coming out here.

“Miss Fran, thank you for waiting.”

“Nn.”

“Viscount Augusto is... Ah, there he is. Hey, over here.”

The Adventurers the Guild Master brought along lifted the Viscount up and carried him off.

“Where will he go?”

“Ah, to the source of the request: Count Olmës.”

That’s a name I haven’t heard yet. Who is he?

“Count Olmës is Viscounts Auguste’s esteemed father.”

“Father detaining his child?”

“Yes. I would like this to remain between just us, but from the start Viscount Auguste had a problematic personality. Still, for the sake of possessing the Law of Lies Skill, Count Olmës didn’t punish him, but instead used him.”

“Nn.”

“However... A few days ago, the Skill suddenly vanished. The reason is unknown, as it’s quite an unusual situation. Well, it’s possible that because he only used his Skill for worthless things, one of the Gods punished him.”

Hmmmm, he was given a punishment alright. Therefore, it’d be fine to be seen like that.

“Anyways, how he ended up after losing the Skill left even me astonished. He was the type to use the Skill to distinguish truth from lies with whoever he met, so when it was lost, it appears he became unable to trust anyone anymore.”

I see. If a Skill you had since birth was lost, then what would become of you? In his case, he became distrustful of other humans. Well, it wasn't that simple, of course. It was more along the lines of completely breaking.

I had only thought that I obtained a convenient Skill, but... I should refrain from using it as much as possible. I don't want to become like the foolish viscount. Thinking that I'd be alright so long as I had that Skill... I'm not special enough for something like that to become reality.

"A few days prior to the discovery he also caused problems towards members of the Royal House, who were visiting for an inspection. Disregarding all semblances of etiquette, he grabbed at them and started shouting not to tell lies in front of an audience."

Uwaa... That's terrible. No, wait... We also stole the Court Etiquette Skill, didn't we? Did that also...?

"And, while under house arrest, he slipped out of his room and hid himself. On that occasion, it seems that he took quite the sum of money with him... Most of it, he apparently used. We tracked his spending all the way to the place he bought some expensive armor."

In all likelihood, that was done under the influence of Gyuran. Then, after catching Fran he intended to abandon Aressa and escape... As if this idiotic noble would be able to pull that off.

"In Count Olmës case, he doesn't want this ordeal to breed a large commotion. And so, before Viscount Auguste caused any more uproars, he came requesting to have him secured in secret.]"

"Secret?"

"Correct. This is my personal opinion, but I believe he's concealed the fact that his son lost the Skill and plans to make use of it in some way. Whether he plans on directly manipulating him, or perhaps plans on using some manner of medical treatment to get the Skill back remains to be seen, but... For the time being, he wants to restrain the Viscount. And so, as to prevent the exposure of this incident, the Count wanted to

proceed with the highest possible degree of secrecy. It's something along this lines."

Hm Hmm... So in other words... Hush money has been prepared?

"*Jii —*"

"..... Don't stare so much. You have the privilege of having this treated as an accomplished commission with a bonus properly added on top."

"Nn. Of course."

"In exchange... You already know, right?"

"Mouth: sealed."

Towards the suddenly nodding, seemingly self-confident Fran the Guild Master directed a strangely uneasy gaze.

"*Haa*. Truly, I beg of you: keep it a secret. The other party is a powerful Noble after all. If he's angered various troubles are sure to follow."

We also want to be spared from being dragged into the family troubles of Nobility. Even if we weren't asked, there's no way we'd go around spreading rumors.

"Well, in regards to the Viscount's personal effects I was told there was no need to recover them, so don't worry."

It seems that it's been concluded that we plundered the equipment alongside and a large sum of money. Er, it's a bit different, you know?

... It seems our debt towards the Guild Master has increased.

Afterwards, we made the decision to keep Fran's name from the Count. For such a powerful Noble, I doubt he'd have interest in the name of a commoner. It'd be really unlikely, right? Still, this is just in case.

By the way, the commission fee alongside the hush money added up to 200,000Gorudo, so all of a sudden our money doubled.

As one would expect of a Noble's commission. Their sense of money must be strange indeed.

CHAPTER 45

RETURN OF THE A RANK

We've gone to the Guild again today.

In the last few days a lot has happened, but the unchanging days have started up again. Frankly, there's not enough excitement. If there were good commissions it'd be alright, but... Well, you know.

[There are only Rank C requests with a large amount of working hours...]

(Again: medical plants gathering?)

[I've also had enough of that, you know~?]

There's still a whole week before we receive the armor from old man Gallus. In the meantime, what should we — hm?

As Fran opens the door to the Guild, we find it unusually noisy on the inside.

"Nell. What happened?"

"Right, Fran doesn't know. I wonder if you haven't met yet?"

"?"

"Well, after finishing the investigation of Maokami Plains, the Rank A and B Adventurers have returned."

"There're Rank A's?"

"Yep. In our guild, there's a single Rank A Adventurer, and 10 B's. Around one month ago they left for the investigation of the Maokami Plains. Other than them, no less than 15 people of Rank C to F accompanied them to gain experience. It's thanks to that the Goblin Subjugation became a big deal.]

Indeed. If there had been A and B Rank Adventurers then the situation could have been settled far easier. In fact, there'd be a high chance that a few elite would have been

picked out to capture it.

However, in that case we wouldn't have been able to bring down the Demon, so for us having them return now rather than then was lucky.

[And I had thought that Donna was the strongest...]

"Nn."

"What's the matter?"

"Donna wasn't strongest."

"Mr. Donnadorondo is skilled at teaching, so he holds the teaching position. In addition, if he had continued to serve in active duty he certainly would have been B Rank by now, you know? However, saying that he wanted to commit himself to the next generation, he became an instructor. It's already been 15 years since he took that position, so over half of Aressa's B and C ranks were taught by him, you know? Because of that, most Adventurers listen to Mr. Donnadorondo."

It was also for that connection that Donna was at the front line of the Goblin Subjugation.

"The A Rank too?"

"Ahh, that person is different. Or rather... That person listens to no one. Honestly, their personality is so overbearing that they're difficult to handle, you know?"

"My, my... Nell, are you speaking ill of me behind my back?"

"*Kya* —! Amanda! Don't draw near while erasing your presence! It's because you do stuff like that I said you're difficult to handle!"

"*Ufufu*~ It's good being hard to handle you know? I'm not a dog for running errands after all."



Their words are harsh, but smiles are floating on both of their faces. Their relationship is good enough to freely bad mouth each other, I guess.

But anyways, she's quite the beautiful woman. A slight Japanese-like air drifts about her black hair cut at the shoulders. She's a gentle and tender type of beauty. Her voice also floats with a gentle feeling, ringing pleasantly in the ears.

However... The feeling I have after hearing her conversation is that her character is fairly stubborn.

"Let me introduce you, Fran. This is Amanda, our A Rank Adventurer as well as our ace. Well, she isn't a bad person, and she's fond of children. At any rate, her title is—"

"*Wah—!* Stop it, Nell! That's embarrassing!"

"Why? It's the *perfect* title for you."

"Oh, buzz off! — *Ohohoho*. Sorry for showing you something unsightly. It's nice to meet you, little miss. I'm Amanda."

"Nn. Fran."

"Amazing... To be so capable at such a young age... You're quite promising~"

"Do you see, Amanda?"

"Naturally."

That's an A Rank Adventurer for you. To see through our strength after only looking at us a little. It doesn't seem to be an Appraisal type Skill, however. Perhaps it's simply her own ability built up through experience?

Name: Amanda Age: 58

Race: Half-Elf

Job: Champion of Storms

State: Normal

Status:

Level: 70

HP: 646 MP: 825

STR: 327 END: 293 AGI: 451

INT: 390 MGC: 423 DEX: 356

Skills:

Coercion Lv7, Chant Shortening Lv6, Stealth Lv8, Dismantling Lv8, Fire Resistance Lv6, Hand-to-Hand Techniques Lv4, Hand-to-Hand Arts Lv7, Wind Magic LvMax, Danger Perception Lv9, Presence Perception Lv8, Herculean Strength Lv5, Mining Lv7, Harvesting Lv8, Instantaneous Movement LvMax, Blink Step Lv7, Sleep Resistance Lv6, Sword Attribution Lv7, Throwing Lv8, Poison Resistance Lv6, Cold Resistance Lv5, Whip Techniques LvMax, Master Whip Techniques Lv2, Whip Arts LvMax, Master Whip Arts Lv4, Storm Magic Lv4, Paralysis Resistance Lv8, Magic Perception Lv5, Lightning Resistance Lv7, Orc Slayer, Vigor Manipulation, Giant Slayer, Physical Reinforcement, Demon Slayer, Dragon Slayer, AGI ↑ High, Storm Reinforcement, Magic Manipulation

Unique Skills:

Grace of the Spirits

Titles:

Orc Slayer, Guardian of Children, Giant Slayer, Dungeon Conqueror, Demon Slayer, Dragon Killer, Personification of a Gale, Master of Wind, Exterminator of Demonic Beasts, Rank A adventurer

Equipment:

Magical Whip of the Heavenly Dragon's Whiskers, Full-Body Leather Armor of the Old Multi-Headed Snake, Overcoat of the Poisonous Lizard Demon, Shoes of the Sovereign Bull Demon, Heavenly Ring of Sacrifice, Ornament of the Thunderbird's Plumes, Ring of bulwark, Feathered Throwing Knives of the Paralysis Owl ×24

The title, 'Guardian of Children', must have been what Nell was alluding to. Is it a Title given to ones who like children, or...?

Well, anyways, she's *strong*. I was astonished when I saw the Guild Master and Donna, but Amanda is on another level. Frankly, she's quite terrifying. That is, this person could even go hunting for Demons.

There's no point in going against her. No matter what manner of surprise attacks are set up, I just can't see us claiming victory.

[She's dangerous. *Never* go against her.]

(Nn. Sure.)

"The story of being the one to raise Ranks fastest since the founding of the guild, of course I've heard about it. A tiny, terribly cute, beautiful beastman Girl wielding a Magic Sword!"

Eh? I'm happy that Fran is being praised, but... Wasn't there a bit too many references to her appearance? Who on earth described her like that! Where's the bastard that looked at Fran with dirty eyes?!

"But, despite that the Guild Master said to not be careless. He said that if you're fooled by her appearance then you're in for a painful experience."

Oi, Guild Master! What are you saying to an A rank adventurer?! — Well, if the Guild Master went "Fran-chan, C U T E ~" it would probably be worse.

"Ah, right. Fran. The Guild Master was calling for you."

"He was? Fine if I go to the room?"

"Please, if you could?"

"Nn."

"My, what a shame. I wanted to take her to eat, but with the Guild Master as my opponent, I'll give up."

"Bye bye."

"Kyaa~ cute~ I want a little sister like you!"

"Amanda, just how old do you think you are? You're mistaking 'sister' with 'daughter', don't you think"

"*Ne~ll~?* Just because you're a bit young, there are good things and bad things to say, you know? Besides Half-Elves age slowly!"

"Yes, yes. Right. Amanda is still young."

They get along really well. Leaving behind Nell and Amanda messing around, Fran moves towards the Guild Master's office.



GanGanGan

“Hey! Who is it! Such rude knocking!”

Gacha

“Came.”

“Ah, it was Miss Fran. How should I say this... If you enter before admission is accepted from the inside, then there's no point in knocking.”

“Shocked.”

“*Haa...* Please be more careful next time.”

Sorry, Guild Master. I will firmly educate her.

“Called: why?”

“To be frank, there's a commission I earnestly want you to accept.”

A request from the Guild Master? There's no way *not* to have a bad premonition, but still.

“There're voices coming from in and outside the Guild holding your ability in question. Of course, I know that they're unjustified, but from the perspective of someone who doesn't know you personally there is no way for them to believe in your abilities. And so, to quiet those voices, won't you take on a certain request?”

No no, the one who went around raising our Rank at his own convenience was *you*,

you know? And now, you come to us with this?

“Ranked by you arbitrarily.”

“Well, it hurts if you say it like that, but... Listen, there are more jealous folks sprouting up than expected. Furthermore, there are also voices advocating *for* you, which makes the situation grow worse. There are many rank D and C Rank Adventurers that have recognized you, understanding your power from experience on the field. It’s beginning to seem as though you’re popular because you’re a mascot.”

Adventurers from the intermediate level and above growing to respect her were expected, but... To think she was also being seen as a mascot...

“Among the lower ranked Adventurers, many don’t approve. There are also those who still haven’t been able to ascend from Rank E for a long time, so after seeing you being raised to rank D so easily, too many have gotten jealous.”

“Leave them be.”

“I would also like to leave it at that, but I simply can’t anymore. Some among them are spreading unfounded rumors like you bought your Rank with money, or that I have preferences for little girls and have been charmed by you.”

For some reason, he’s begun muttering complaints.

“There is no way that I prefer little girls! Good grief, spare me *please*. To begin with I prefer ——”

This guy... Could it be that he just doesn’t like being called a lolicon, so he brought this up?

“Accepting: not compulsory?”

“Now, now. If you say it like that, then there would be several bonuses attached, right?. Please, just hear me out at least.”

He’s desperate. Really, it only feels like he wants to deny the suspicions of him being a

lolicon.

“The bonus added onto the commission fee is obvious, but there’ll also be an entrance permit for the Dungeon of the town of Urmut issued.”

“..... How did you know?”

“Well, if you request documents related to it in the Reference Room, even if you don’t want me to know I’ll end up knowing about it. For admission to the Dungeon your Adventurer Rank is certainly sufficient, but with that alone permission won’t be granted. In all likelihood, the person deciding will place their judgement — with the possibility of rejection — on the spot.”

Is that so... And for a lone, cute little beastkin girl, there’s definitely a chance we won’t pass. Furthermore, even if she does pass the process might take a while.

“If you have a permit, examinations are unneeded. You can immediately dive into the Dungeon.”

And, as a result, save time. *Tsk*, this clever Elf. He knows quite a bit about us, huh.

“... For now: I’ll hear you out.”

“Thank you very much. Well then, the commission is this one.”

Essentially, the commission is an investigation request for the Dungeon in Aressa.

“A Dungeon in Aressa? First time heard about it.”

“It’s a dungeon that has already been captured, but it’s usually not open to the public. Every few months, the Guild carries out a survey.”

“Captured, yet: investigation?”

“The Dungeon Core is still in one piece, after all. If you have the core, then a small amount of manipulation is possible... It’s only to the degree of being able to spawn certain Demonic Beasts using the spawning settings, and creating items though. In addition, those can only be made so long as they’re within the range of the Core’s magical power. Because of all that, Aressa’s Dungeon is limited to the production of

Demonic Beast with at most Rank F, alongside only a handful of items.”

With that, it isn’t profitable at all. Were it possible to simply create high-level Potions or Demonic Beast with rare ingredients, then it would give birth to amazing profits.

“And if the Core amasses a lot of magical power?”

“If that was possible then we wouldn’t have to go through so many hardships. We had assembled several dozens of human magicians to channeled their power into the core, but even with that there wasn’t much change.”

“Then, how does it store magical power?”

“The core drains it from veins within the ground, the atmosphere, and apparently from any Demonic Beasts and Adventurers inside of the Dungeon. In addition, even if it isn’t much, Dungeon Masters have other means of filling it with magical power. Otherwise, the maintenance of the labyrinth would be impossible”

Vast amounts of magical power should be necessary to summon things like a Demon normally, after all.

“Therefore, it’s important for Demonic Beasts to inhabit the dungeon. If they don’t, then magical power isn’t accumulated, and to a certain degree the Core can’t do its work. As for Aressa’s dungeon, it’s set up to generate items at periodic intervals. The request also includes the retrieval of those.”

“Subjugating the Demonic Beasts: alright?”

“It doesn’t matter. They’d multiply again soon enough. Rather, thinning them out so they don’t become too numerous is also part of the job. If left alone for too long, evolutions might occur... And that would be dangerous.”

The completion fee is quite good, too. There’s just one problem, though. That is, in the details “For several Parties” is written. To work together with idiots like the ones who attacked us: no thank you.

“Ah, in regards to the parties, arrangements have already been made.”

“What types of people?”

“This commission serves simultaneously as a Rank Up examination to Rank D, so at present 9 Rank E adventurers are divided into 2 Parties, and a 3-person Rank C Party serves as the examiner. I can pledge for their background, but for their nature... You’ll have to confirm for yourself.”

I’d hate to cast the request away, but... What shall we do? We’re fine even if we don’t take it, after all.

“Next, in the case you accept the commission I would need to receive a written Oath.”

“Written Oath?”

“Oath Magic makes it possible to bind a target through a written pledge.”

“Like a Contract?”

“Yes. However, in contrast to a Contract which is from one person to another, a written vow is able bind several. In exchange, the bond is frail.”

“Hm.”

“The content of the vow would be barring the disclosure of the request’s contents. In the case this Oath is violated, your Guild Card would contain a remark about your violation. At worst, measures of decreasing one’s Rank, or even Expulsion would occur.”

Oath Magic, huh? Somehow, it gives me a bad feeling. Binding someone through magic, no matter what it’s for, reminds me of slavery.

[Fran. What now?]

“Nn—?”

When Fran showed a troubled expression the Guild Master, somewhat panicked, placed a small bag on the table.

“Now, now. I put a personal bonus for you as well, so...”

Hmm. A personal bonus from the guild master, huh? From that we can expect

something, but...

“Please, take a look.”

As he turns the bag upside down, around 20 magic stones roll out.

“These are?”

“Something like my secret savings. They are magic stones I obtained while I was still in active duty, and each one of them is from a Demonic Beast of Threat Level D or above.”

So it seems. Selling the magic stones would be fine, but they can also be used for producing armor. In other words, this reward is better than gold.

Still, the Guild Master’s eyes seem as though they’re probing for something... Did he realize that we desired magical stones? Fran doesn’t sell her magic stones, so perhaps he’s begun suspecting us of something based off of that?

“Why magic stones?”

“Well? Are they to your liking?”

If anything imprudent is said here, I have a hunch that our side will gain the disadvantage. Of course, even if it’s exposed that we desire magic stones, the purpose will still be unknown. With that in mind, we ought to finish it here.

“Not bad.”

“Right?”

(How about Teacher?)

[I’m sorry to say, but I don’t know what Skills they hold. At best, I’m able to know which Demonic Beasts they’re from. The extent of their magic power is also hard to guess.]

Even so, the ones the Guild Master placed in front of us are certainly good magic

stones. Threat Level D was on the same level as the Blast Tortoise and the Doppel Snake, after all. Still, to compulsorily undergo Oath Magic is a bit...

“From these, I will present you with whichever two you’d like. How about that?”

“Hmm... For ten: I’ll accept.”

“Wha– As you would expect, that is–! Three!”

“Nine.”

“Hey, that will go on with 4, 8, 5, 7 and in the end, won’t this pattern raise it to 6?! No way! Four stones. I won’t yield more than that.”

“Then: decline.”

“Gu...”

“Five. Paid in advance.”

“Mumu...”

“Good bye.”

“A-Alright.....!”

Oh, good job Fran! To corner this Guild Master!

“In exchange for them, I’ll be counting on you for afore-mentioned matter.”

“Nn.”

“I’ve heard all about it!”

Without warning, the door is flung open and Amanda storms into the room. The same entrance pattern as Auguste. Is the security of this room even remotely alright? Even as a joke, it’s still supposed to be the Guild Master’s room.

But, well, that’s an A Rank Adventurer for you. I couldn’t feel her presence at all.

“Let me borrow this for a moment!”

Amanda quickly snapped the documents the Guild Master placed in front of him and

started reading. What an audacious woman! And yet, even with her attitude, the Guild Master isn't saying anything.

"I thought so! For the accompanying Adventurers... Won't there only be men?!"

Well, there's no helping it. Even if you say that there aren't any girls coming along, it's only because there are so few female Adventures. The ratio is around 20 to 1, I think? If you consider that, then it's not strange for there to be no woman among the 12 people coming along.

"Among males reeking of sweat, the cute little Fran would be all alone... There's no way I could permit such a thing! Therefore, I will be going with her on this commission!"

"No. Furthermore, there is already someone with a suitable Rank that will be acting as--"

"I will be going with her!"

"..... I understand."

To talk down to the Guild Master with such vigor... The Guild Master probably noticed that no matter what he said, it would have been useless.

"Miss Fran, are you also alright with that?"

"Nn. No problem."

CHAPTER 46

INTRODUCTIONS

It's been one hour since we received the request from the Guild Master.

We've returned to the inn.

[Then, shall I absorb the Magic Stones?]

"Nn."

[I wonder what kind of Skills we'll get...]

"Excited."

[Thinking about it, this is a bit like a grab-bag^[1], huh.]

"Grab-bag?"

[Ahh, how should I put it... A grab-bag is a bag filled with hopes, dreams, and a bit of despair.]

"Somehow: amazing."

[Many brave men have challenged such bags for items of favor, only to meet a terrible fate.]

"Has Teacher seen one before?"

[Well...]

"Amazing!"

Well, before I make a fool out of myself, let's use absorb the magic stone.

Thanks to Demonic Beast Knowledge, I can see the stones' Ranks just fine. With 5 stones total, 3 are D Rank, and 2 are C Rank.

The D Ranks come from a **Fortress Hermit Crab**, a **Sea Lion**, and a **Trident Shark**. I had chosen Demonic Beasts of the sea since we hadn't actually seen the ocean yet.

As for the 2 C Rank magic stones, one is from a **Red Colossus**, and one is from an **Old Yeti**.

“First: D Rank.”

[*Mhh!* Here we go!]

Fortress Hermit Crab Magic Stone Status : 39

Hunger Resistance : Lv1, Water Pressure Resistance : Lv1, Underwater Respiration : Lv1, Weight Reduction

Sea Lion Magic Stone Status : 79

Swimming : Lv1, Current Manipulation : Lv1, Water Bullet Discharge : Lv1

Trident Shark Magic Stone Status : 43

Underwater Acoustics : Lv1, Current Jet : Lv1, Watersports^[2] : Lv1

We obtained quite the variety. We’ve attained an extensive set of water-based Skills, just as planned. Next is the well-awaited C Rank stones.

“*Ha!*”

The Magic Stone thrown into the sky by Fran is cut in two through in one stroke by me. *Uo* —, it came, it came! After a long time, the sense of absorbing big-game has come!

Red Colossus Magic Stone Status : 196

Frenzy : Lv1, Heat Resistance : Lv1, Weight Increase, STR ↑

Old Yeti Magic Stone Status : 127

Cold Resistance : Lv1, Poison Knowledge : Lv1, Ice Resistance : Lv1, INT ↑ Low

With these, a long-awaited Rank Up will occur! Prior to absorbing the 5 stones, my status looked like this:

ATK : 434 Retained MP : 2050/2050 Durability : 1850/1850

Magical Power Conductivity • A

Skills:

Self-Evolution<Rank 8 • Magic Stone Status: 3146/3600 • Memory: 70 • Points: 2>

And now, it's like this:

Name : Teacher

Equipment Registration : Fran

Race : Intelligent Weapon

ATK : 478 Retained MP : 2500/2500 Durability : 2300/2300

Magical Power Conductivity • A

Skills:

Self-Evolution<Rank 9 • Magic Stone Status: 3630/4500 • Memory: 79 • Points: 47>

Alright, alright! With this, I can tweak my Skills yet again. This time, Superior Skills are the things on my mind. I couldn't afford to tamper with it before, but I'd like to make use of it.

And so, my eyes are fixed on Sword Arts LvMax. When I make it a Superior Skill, will it simply become Master Sword Arts, or will it become a completely unknown Skill? If it does become Master Sword Arts not much will change in terms of sword-fighting, but what would happen to Sword Techniques? If its supporting skill Sword Arts disappears, would Sword Techniques even be usable? Or, because I have Master Sword Arts, would it work without an issue?

The chance to find out has arrived. Even if the worst occurs, there're many Goblins

that carry Sword Arts, and with Self-Evolution Points, bringing it back to LvMax isn't really an issue.

[During this commission, we should be able to secure a magic stone from a Sword Arts carrier!]

“Ooh —”



It's been two days since that was said. We've once again returned to the Adventurers Guild.

“Now then, let's take this chance to introduce ourselves. My name is Cruz. I'm the leader of the C Rank party[Azure Guard] to which these two, Rigg and Izel, are members of. For this commission, I'll be acting as your instructor as well as your examiner.”

Name : Cruz Liuzel Age : 28

Race : Human

Job : Blink Swordsman

State : Normal

Status: Level : 33

HP : 256 MP : 175 STR : 113 END : 119 AGI : 178 INT : 80 MGC : 91
DEX : 119

Skills:

Malice Perception : Lv3, Stealth : Lv2, Evasion : Lv5, Court Etiquette : Lv3, Presence Perception : Lv4, Sword Techniques : Lv5, Sword Arts : Lv7, Self-Defense Arts : Lv4, Leadership : Lv2, Instantaneous Movement : Lv7, Cold Resistance : Lv4, Poison Resistance : Lv5, Trap Perception : Lv2, Vigor Manipulation

Titles:

Righteous

Equipment:

Mithril Longsword of Flame, Light-Silver Steel Armor, Light-Silver Steel Gauntlets, Light-Silver Steel Greaves, Cloak of One Hundred Spiders, Bracelet of Poison Resistance

He's an Ikemen. A blonde-haired Ikemen. An Ikemen that's C Rank despite his young age, and judging by his white-and-shiny equipment he's probably loaded. Furthermore, he has a family name, meaning he probably comes from an aristocratic home. His very facial features seem to emanate a feeling of nobility. Undoubtedly, this man is popular! *Tch!*

Aside from that, he has the Righteous Title. With that in mind, he doesn't seem like a bad person... So I'll refrain from cursing him for now. If he goes after Fran, it'll be an instant death, however!

"I use the Sword as my weapon. Please treat me well."

Although the abilities between C Ranks should be roughly equivalent, he's weaker than Donna. Or rather, I should probably see Donna as top-class among C Ranks.

In terms of Status, his two comrades are similar to him. Rigg is a user of Water Magic, while Izel seems to be something like a Scout-oriented Thief. Although they give off completely different feelings than Cruz, their relationship seems to be good. They must have been picked quite skillfully.

"From the E Rank party [Roar of the Dragon], m' name's Clad: the leader. My fort   is the Spear. With us 'ere, this Dungeon exploration'll be finished in no time!"

Clad has spiky gray hair and suntanned skin, and behind him several Yankee-like youths raise their voices. His height is most likely more than 180_{cm}.

Name : Clad Age : 23

Race : Human

Job : Warrior

State : Normal

Status: Level : 20

HP : 127 MP : 97 STR : 67 END : 56 AGI : 47 INT : 50 MGC : 46 DEX : 42

Skills:

Transportation : Lv2, Balancing Act : Lv4, Danger Perception : Lv3, Hunger Resistance : Lv3, Pugilist Arts : Lv1, Spear Techniques : Lv1, Spear Arts : Lv4, Threatening : Lv3, Climbing : Lv3, Vigor Manipulation

Titles:

None

Equipment:

High-Quality Steel Spear, Plate Armor of the Rock Ox, Vambraces of the Rock Ox, Boots of the Giant Spider, Overcoat of the Stone Spider, Bracelet of Self-Healing • Low

It seems that the condition to raise to Rank D is only whether or not you can use Techniques, so while he's not particularly strong, Rank E's should be at about his skill level. As for the four other members of his party, they have similar Spear-related skills. There doesn't seem to be a lot of flexibility, but they're probably strong when working together. Or... That's the impression I have, anyways.

From what I've seen, Rank C's are usually around Level 35, Rank D's are about Level 25, Rank E's are around Level 15, and Rank F's are only about Level 10; Rank G's are even lower. That's more or less how the ranks' level-zones are.

There *are* exceptions to that, however. For example, the former Mercenaries that picked a fight with Fran and were exterminated. Their levels were ~15, but their abilities didn't match up. Judging by their low Skill levels, they likely power-leveled just to seem strong.

Viscount Auguste is a similar case. Even though he was Level 30 — about Rank C in equivalency — he would probably lose against an E Rank in a fight.

In that respect, Clad is quite good. His status is definitely one that would allow him to step foot into the grounds of Rank D.

That being said, his personality doesn't seem to be all that great. He's been looking at Fran all this time, so chances are he thinks that the lovely little Fran is out of her mind for participating.

"I'm Frion, leader of the E Rank party:[Eyes of the Forest]. I'm not very good with weapons, but I can use Spirit Magic to compensate."

A blond, thin-eyed Elf. There's no other way to describe him. He seems a bit younger than the Guild Master.

Name : Frion Age : 49

Race : Wood Elf

Job : Spirit User

State : Normal

Status Level : 26

HP : 71 MP : 233 STR : 36 END : 34 AGI : 60 INT : 91 MGC : 111 DEX : 69

Skills:

Archery : Lv1, Harvesting : Lv2, Cultivation : Lv4, Evil Perception : Lv3, Nature Magic : Lv3, Plant Knowledge : Lv7, Drowsiness Resistance : Lv3, Spirit Magic : Lv5, Soil Magic : Lv3, Water Magic : Lv4, Medicinal Herb Knowledge : Lv4, Divine Protection of the Spirits, Magic Manipulation, Child of the Forest

Equipment:

Cane of the Black Speckled Elm, Breastplate of the Red Monkey, Clothes of the Forest Spider's Thread, Overcoat of the Forest Spider's Thread, Ring of Water Production

He's a Wood Elf: same as the Guild Master. His Skill configuration is also similar. The only difference is that he's not strong, huh? I think that Clad's overall strength is higher. In particular, his peculiar pro-magic build seemingly characteristic to the Elves isn't that eye-opening.

As for his companions, there're two Warriors and one person with the configuration of a Ranger. It's pretty well-balanced.

"Then I guess I'm next? I'm Amanda. Best regards."

Without mentioning her Rank, she gives a brief greeting. However, just that was enough. The only Adventurer that didn't know of her would have been Fran a couple of days ago, after all.

The Rank E's are too shocked for words. That an A Rank would take on a Rank D request is unprecedented; she sticks out like a sore thumb.

Only Clad seems capable of forming his words.

"I see how it is..."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I know th' reason an A Rank like *you*'d take on such a low-rank request! This commission's probably just somethin' you took in your spare time, right?! We had to seriously prepare ourselves, y'know?! This isn't where you should be playing around!"

Uwa — He said it right to her face, huh. Well, I can see that he's only pretending to be tough given by his stiff expression though. Maybe he's at the age where he's compelled to pick fights with the strong?

"I have no intention of simply playing around though? Besides, I have permission from the Guild Master."

“*Tsk*”

“Now, now. Then, the young lady next please.”

Cruz diverts the conversation to bring a change to the bad air starting to develop. With the selfish Amanda and the seemingly-strong Clad, he has good reason to worry about the situation. This has definitely surpassed the duties of an examiner. My condolences.

“Fran.”

“..... That’s all? Is there anything else?”

“Rank D. Beastman. Favorite thing: **Curry**. Don’t particularly dislike anything.”

Clad, your gaze is scary. He doesn’t really seem to like Fran. She’s a newly-raised Rank D, so it’s possible that he can’t permit such a young girl being ranked higher than himself.

“No, that’s not... I was meaning your weapon choice or the like...”

“*Oi, brat*. I said it before, but we’re going at this mission **seriously**. If y’think this’ll just be a simple excursion, then it’s better for you to go back home and suck your mom’s teat ‘nstead!”

We —ll, you certainly like picking fights, huh Clad? Even though you’re a Human, you seem more like a mad dog. Moreover, he’s even using his Threatening Skill. His intention to make her cry is clear, but... Well, things like that don’t work on Fran at all.

“Mother’s dead.”

“..... *Tsk*.”

Mhm. Those words hit the hardest, huh. If he could retort to even that, his identity as a Human would seriously be doubted. In addition, he would’ve needed to do so under the bloodthirsty gaze that Amanda’s giving off.

“For an adult to shout at a child! Seriously... Are you alright, Fran?”

“Nn. No problem.”

Such a threat was only at the level of a puppy yapping away when compared to the feeling of intimidation given off from a *devil*. Hopefully, my implied meaning in those words is understood. Anyways, Clad returns with provocation. His aim isn't Fran, though.

“**You-!** Wadda ya mean by that? *Aah?*”

“*Err* — Then, because the self-introductions are over, I'll move on to the briefing.”

Wanting to avoid any more turmoil, Cruz forcibly ends the conversation. Hang in there, Cruz. I have no means of helping you, but because the above-mentioned dispute has happened early on, do your best. It's a good opportunity, probably!

“*Please*, attempt to be friends for the duration of the request.”

“*Fu* —”

“*Ke*”

“No problem. Good friends.”

“I sincerely hope that's the case...!”

After crying so in desperation, Cruz moved onto the briefing.

“The request consists of the investigation of Aressa's Dungeon:[Cobweb]which has already been conquered. In addition, we are to recover the Magic Ore that's being generated by the Dungeon at the same time.”

The Dungeon consists of six layers, and its inhabitants mainly consist of insect-type Demonic Beasts. In particular, the 5th and 6th layers are essentially Spider Demonic Beast nests, and their numbers are no laughing matter.

“Because the Magic Ore is generated in the Dungeon Core Room, it's necessary to make our way there.”

“So we’re to collect Magic Ore, then.”

“Ah, ’bout the Demonic Beasts, can we take ’em down? They’re bein’ allowed to live there on purpose, right? “

“Ahh, there’s no problem. Reducing the number of Demonic Beasts is also part of the request to a certain extent.”

“Hehehe. I’m lookin’ forward to it.”

Spider-type Demonic Beasts by the name of Trap Spider reside in Cobweb, ranked at Threat Level F. It isn’t a bad opponent for low-class Adventurers for the sake of experience.

“I’ll warn you now, but while the Spiders are weak when they’re alone, they’re intelligent enough to use traps in groups. Their true threat comes from their cooperation. Please, don’t be careless.”

“Ke, there’s no way I’d lose to a Demonic Beast that even a Rank F could take care a’. They’re nothin’ but experience points.”

“..... In addition, Demonic Beasts aren’t the only thing to watch out for inside the Dungeon. Most of the traps in Cobweb aren’t a big deal, but watch out for Transition Traps^[3].”

Transition Traps are traps that transfer their victim to any place in the Dungeon. It’s difficult to prevent them from triggering, so even experts can fall into a crisis.

There seem to have been cases where Transition Traps placed in spider webs were triggered, sending their victims to Monster Rooms. There’s a need to be careful.

“The Transition Trap is a fiendish trap that can sometimes involve more than just yourself. Be careful.”

“Yeah, yeah. I got it, I got it.”

He doesn’t understand at all. I’m worried. With a reckless, incompetent fellow with a high likelihood of sabotaging others... I’ll have to protect Fran.

As for the current Status of Fran:

Name : Fran Age : 12

Race : Black Cat Beastman

Job : Magic Swordsman

State : Contracted

Status: Level : 25

HP : 304 MP : 215

STR : 150 END : 129 AGI : 140

INT : 95 MGC : 117 DEX : 108

CHAPTER 47

A LITTLE BIT OF TRAINING

It's the first day of the Dungeon Investigation commission.

With the group who left the Guild after making a commotion, we arrived at the entrance to a cave after half of the day had passed.

Well, the journey itself was quite serious in its own way. Mainly due to Clad. It seems he has the king-of-the-mountain trait, not liking anyone taking the lead other than himself; he just charged ahead each and every time. I was surprised that he would even talk back to the examiner: Cruz.

If he really wants to raise to D Rank, he couldn't seriously think that leaving a bad impression is the way to go, right? Or is he thinking that 'I have to be assertive!' = 'I'm the type to make decisions proactively!' and 'I'm not scared of my superiors!' = 'I have courage!'...?

I don't see the appeal.

Well, the thoughts of one person doesn't amount to much in the end.

Anyways, because Amanda is quite strong-willed, standoffs between the two continued to occur regularly. Because Clad always ended up losing to Amanda's vigor, he really should have stopped opposing her from the start.

Frion stayed uninvolved with any disputes, taking the position of a complete bystander. However, it could also be said that he was unwilling to lend a hand in quelling the arguments, too. Because of this, mediation between the two whenever a dispute occurred was left entirely to Cruz. Is it just my imagination, or does he seem strangely fatigued even though only half a day has passed? Everyone should really pitch in to help with these sorts of things.

What about Fran, you ask? Well, everyone has strong points and weak points.

That all aside, it was interesting to see Amanda battling along the way. Not only was her use of the whip amazing, but her use of wind-type Magic seemed incredibly useful. Unlike fire-type magics, using them in the middle of a woodland is fine.

After everything that occurred, we arrived a bit behind schedule. While we should have arrived at the Dungeon in the evening, it's already night.

"Erm... Originally we should have gone inside on the first day and traveled through two layers of the Dungeon, capturing the rest tomorrow, but... Because we're a little behind schedule, we'll stop and camp here today and head into the Dungeon early tomorrow. Sound good?"

"What d'you mean 'camp'! We should just hurry up and start conquering the Dungeon immediately, right? Conquering this Dungeon'll be easy; there're only small fries inside, y'know?"

"The Ranks of the Demonic Beasts within are indeed low, but it's dangerous to go in with a tired body. And so, we'll be camping here today."

"I agree."

"Me too."

"Sounds good."

"Tsk! Cowards!"

Even after saying so, Clad doesn't stand up and go in by himself. Even *he* should understand that it's dangerous to go into the Dungeon after walking for half a day. Cruz seems a bit unsatisfied with his reaction, but he doesn't say anything else.

To be honest, Clad's the type of person I inherently dislike. He's just the sort of person to start throwing in weird suggestions and quibble when an agenda is about to be finalized in class. *Even though* the surroundings are thinking "Geez, it doesn't matter. I just want this to be finished so I can go home, so be quiet already," he'd continue to oppose the popular opinion endlessly.

“Fran! Would you like to sleep in my Tent? It’d be fine to leave the watch to the men.”

“Decline.”

“A —hh, so co —ld.”

“I’ll leave the first watch to you, miss Fran. After that, my group, Clad’s group, and Frion’s group will take over in that order.”

Oho, he pushed the Midnight watch — the most difficult time — to Clad, huh. You shouldn’t do that, Cruz. Even if it’s only a little, don’t retaliate.

“The A Rank won’t be keeping watch?”

“Amanda is acting as a spectator. Besides, if I asked her to help then it wouldn’t be a proper test for you guys. If she participated, it’d take less than an hour to traverse the Dungeon on foot, and we’d be able to leave for home before the day ends. As for the results of the examination in that case: you’d all fail.”

Even non-standard opponents would be easily finished off by an A Rank. In fact, they’d only be at the level of a nuisance. With that, it’d be better to look at Amanda as insurance in case of an emergency.

“Ke. Is that so.”

It’s already been decided that I’ll keep watch as well when it’s Cruz’s turn. He continued grumbling afterwards, but was made to fall silent by Amanda in the end.

“You should have been notified beforehand, but meals and bedding are to be prepared by each party individually, alright?”

There’s also that. After asking Randell, we obtained some high-quality bedding. A sleeping bag and blankets, all for just 7,000Gorudo!

As for the meals... Well, that goes without saying. I had cooked large quantities of

Demonic Beasts for this exact purpose, after all. Because we're the first watch we postponed the meal, however.

"Oi, Oi. Can a single brat e'en keep watch?"

"No problem."

"Ahh? Y'think I can just trust a brat's words so easily?"

"She's a Rank D Adventurer. That's higher than you guys, right? If she says that there're no problems, then it's fine."

"Her even *being* Rank D is questionable! What could a kid have done while we were on expedition, hah? Chances are, she just used 'er body t'gain the favor of that lolicon Guild Master, right? So, how'd ya be able to do it, huh?!"

Ah —, this guy was part of the returned-from-the-investigation group, huh. In that case, he wouldn't have a chance to witness Fran's battle prowess. At a Rank of this level, tricks shouldn't be possible to measure the ability of an individual, yet Clad misunderstood that as us getting our Rank through unjust means.

Well. Our increase in Ranks was quite peculiar. There's plenty of room for doubt.

Still, I can't forgive what I can't forgive.

[Fran, how are you holding up?]

(? Nothing particularly wrong. Slightly noisy.)

Clad continues exercising his Threatening Skill, but it seems that it's only seen as a bit noisy to Fran.

"Ability."

"**Ha!** *Ability*? A brat like you can't reach Rank D with jus' ability!"

"Ability (mine and Teacher's)."

"Hyahaha! A'right, then *show me*. Let's 'train' a little."

After saying so, Clad lifts up his Spear. It seems he's intent on having a mock battle.

Fran raises slowly in return. *Haa* — Her battle-preparations are already complete.

[Fran, sparring is fine but don't go too far, alright?]

(Understood. Just training a bit.)

She has a good smile. However, no one else is saying anything. Because Frion and his companions aren't the type to speak up I can understand it, but.....

I'd have thought that Amanda would have put a stop to this at the very beginning... Instead, she's just laughing. Well, maybe she figures there's no problem due to the difference in ability between Fran and Clad.

As for Cruz though, he doesn't seem to plan on stepping in at all. Has he become so exhausted that he's completely ran out of fuel? No, it doesn't seem like that's the case. He's looking at the two with an earnest expression.

That reminds me, I didn't see Cruz in the Goblin Subjugation either. Chances are, he was part of the return group in that case. In other words... He also wants to ascertain Fran's abilities. Cruz's two companions are casually paying attention to the surroundings, as to act as substitutions for Fran.

[Fran, before we begin, you should set up a Barrier in the surroundings.]

If we start the mock battle as-is, Clad might end up complaining that we didn't do a proper job as lookout.

(Nn. Understood.)

“—Wind • Zone”

“—Ground • Zone”

Wind • Zone is a magic barrier from Wind Magic, and can cover any range from its origin in a dome-shape. If anything intrudes within the barrier, the caster can sense it using the flow of wind.

Ground • Zone is also a magic barrier, this time from Soil Magic. It also creates a dome of any range from the origin. The difference between it and Wind • Zone is that it acts on and under the ground. On the other hand, it has no effect on intrusions via the air.

Through employing both Wind and Soil, one is able to cover all directions.

“.....*Ha?* T-This is... Magic?”

“Moreover, from two attributes...”

“Seriously?”

Clad’s party members started making noise in the background. Up until now, they had been watching things develop with smirks on their faces... But now they’ve taken on a blue tint.

“Y-You... You’re a Magician?!”

“? Not a Magician.”

“No, but, that jus’ now was Magic, wasn’t it?!”

“Usable without being a Magician.”

“T-That’s true, but.....”

It seems that with only barrier-type magic we’ve managed to intimidate Clad. It’s only a simple Lv4 magic, so only Rank E Adventurers and their equivalents will show up for Fran.

“Then, let’s begin.”

“R-Right. A’right, let’s go!”

‘I can’t use magic, but my Spear won’t lose’. Such is the feeling I get from the

determined expression on his face. In a fight between a Sword and a Spear, the Spear has an overwhelming advantage. In a one-on-one match, it can't be beat.

"..... Any time."

"Tsuyaah!"

No wait-and-see tactics? Is that alright? Perhaps he's going full-offensive since he sensed Fran's strength a bit?

With all his energy placed in a lunge to her face, Clad has no plans on stopping just before the strike lands. Frion, who was watching in an easygoing manner while dining shows an expression of shock. This is, indeed, surprising. From behind, Clad's comrades leak a scream. Seeing Fran not move at all, they must have thought that Clad's strike landed directly.

However, their expectations were way off the mark.

"No use."

Fran, with only light swing of me, deflects the tip of the spear. Clad, whose body was covered in too much momentum, becomes wide open. There, Fran's kick explodes.

"GAH!"

Blown off his feet, Clad falls to the ground.

"Damn it!"

"Continue?"

"O-Obviously! My guard was down jus' then, but I won't be 'olding back from now on!"

Ohh! This is the first time I've heard the bad-loser cliché! He's unsightly for saying such a thing, so I can't really say that I approve. Well, maybe I can a little.

“Then, my move.”

“Aa **—gh!**”

From Clad’s perspective, Fran’s figure should have disappeared, followed by a sudden impact from the side. Through Fran’s quick movements, he was struck with my stomach.

“I can still.....!”

“Nn.”

“Oraora**raah!**”

In desperation, Clad swings his spear around violently, giving off consecutive thrusts. Fran isn’t hit at all, however. *Thrust, thrust, thrust. Dodge, dodge, dodge.* I wonder how long this process repeated itself?

“Why?! What’s—!”

“Not hitting.”

“How is this even—!”

It’s probably been around three minutes since Clad continued striking with his Spear. I already feel dizzy, you know? Panting, his expression has turned miserable, probably due to the shock of realizing that not even one of his attacks have been successful.

“Damn it, *damn it!*”

“Then, time to finish.”

“***Damn iii—GOHA !***”

For the second time, I strike him. This time, the strike lands on his face, causing him to lose consciousness and fall onto his back.

“Leader!”

Clad’s companions quickly rush to his side.

[Well, with this he shouldn’t make such a fuss anymore.]

“Nn. Regrettable.”

[Ahh, regrettable indeed.]

He didn’t make a good sparring partner by any means. Still, against a person with such a difficult personality, the battle was comical at least.

“Fran, so strong~”

“Nn.”

Suddenly, Amanda’s arms wrap around Fran. I wasn’t even able to notice her approach. *Damn*, how mortifying.

However, Amanda has a hint of discomfort on her face. She has the same gentle smile as usual, but... Her eyes aren’t smiling at all. If anything, they look the same as a bird of prey which found game.

“Hey. Won’t you spar with me as well?”

“With Amanda?”

“That’s right. I’m a Solo A Rank, you know? I’ve been having trouble finding a training partner lately, but if it’s Fran then some good practice might be possible!”

Ahh, she wouldn’t have anyone to train with, would she? Sparring with an A Rank... It would be a valuable experience. Training in of itself is good. I don’t think that any accidents will occur, either.....

[Hey, Fran—]

(Great training for Master Sword Arts.)

[... That's right.]

“Nn.”

Hah... it's no good. She's in complete battle-mode right now. It won't be possible to stop Fran when she's like this.

CHAPTER 48

A SHORT SPAR

“Haahhh!”

“Fuu!”

[Dangerous! This is seriously dangerous!]

Amanda’s whip strikes where Fran had just been standing.

DoGOoOoO

That isn’t the power of a whip! It’s more like some sort of giant mallet was thrown into the fray, sinking the ground in!

“Ahahaha! That’s the way, Fran!”

“.....!”

We’re caught completely in Amanda’s pace. Fran’s been obstructed by that transcendent-quality whip right from the start, so it’s impossible to get in close.

As expected of an A Rank Adventurer. I had thought that we could have a good match, but I was making light of her.

[That whip sure is troublesome...]

Only defensive movement can be taken to block its attacks, which come from any angle. The strikes are ever-changing, and infinite in variety. Sometimes, the attacks can come in the form of heavy-hitting blunt strikes, sometimes they can cut clean through rocks, and sometimes, not even sound can keep up with them. Frankly speaking, it’s strange that Fran hasn’t been defeated already.

[Are you alright?]

(Teacher, interference: forbidden.)

[I know.]

(*Nn!* Will absolutely get an attack in.)

[*Ou.* Do your best.]

That might be too high a target... Amanda hasn't even moved from her starting position, after all.

She's already peerless when it comes to the whip, but it should be kept in mind that Amanda's Job is Champion of Storms, meaning she's fully capable of using the higher form of Wind Magic: Storm Magic. However, she has yet to use any magic whatsoever. In other words, she hasn't considered it necessary to do so.

Even if I observe her flow of magic using the Sorcery Skill, there's no change. And, on top of not using any magic, she hasn't even used any Whip Techniques, giving a looming feeling of dread.

However, Fran isn't ordinary either. Gradually, she's getting used to the movements of the whip. The distance between her and Amanda is growing shorter.

"*Now!*"

"*Naïve!*"

"*Predicted.*"

"*Mu-! You did it, huh!*"

Maybe the mock battle was worth it, after all? Fran reached a position where I could almost reach Amanda.

Finally, after five minutes since the battle began, Amanda was forced to move her legs. Fran, receiving an immense amount of bloodthirst, takes some distance once again.

“Ah, pardon me. It seems that the naïve one was me.”

“Nn.”

“..... *Sh!*”

“–*Bu*”

“It’s the first time in a while that I needed to dodge in a fight.”

With her whip undulating like a snake, Amanda launches herself at Fran. Her movement is just like a snake. Furthermore, the presence of magic was felt from whatever Skill she was using. Most likely, it’s a Whip Technique.

With that, the battle intensifies even further. Wounds, big and small, cover Fran’s entire body the more time passes. The power of the whip clad in magic power using Whip Techniques is terrific, and while Fran is barely able to evade them, she’s being damaged by the wind pressure.

Still, I’m not too worried. The day we met Amanda, we went to look up information on her. Right off the bat, we found that she was a good person in general, and was good-natured through and through.

To begin with, Amanda has managed an orphanage for more than 30 years. There’re nearly 500 people in the current Aressa who came from said orphanage, making her well-loved by many.

When Cobweb was still active near Aressa in the past, Adventurers flourished. Because of that, the number of orphans whose Parents died while adventuring also rose, and the guards weren’t exactly the kindest, either. At 20 years old, Amanda (only a D Rank at the time) extended a helping hand out to such children.

Casting her materials aside, she built an orphanage to educate and bring up any orphans she could find. Nowadays there’s plenty of help from people around town, and the management of the orphanage is favorable as well, but... Back then it would have been painful to smile through it all.

Furthermore, regarding the Title ‘Guardian of Children’, to obtain it you not only have to *save* children, but be *loved* by them as well. It’s said to be a Title that would be lost upon enacting any inappropriate behavior.

Amanda, possessing such a Title, would obviously be a good friend for Fran, who is a child herself.

Perhaps, so long as they’re both mutually satisfied, then it’s of no consequence whether injuries are inflicted in this battle... Or maybe, it’s because all of these wounds aren’t inflicted with malicious intent.

“Ha!”

“Kuu.....”

Still, the intensity of this battle is worrisome.

It’s gradually becoming a one-sided battle, with Fran on the defensive.

... Huh? At this rate, isn’t this really bad? Anti-Death prevents instant death, but it isn’t absolute. You could die again immediately if you’re in a Poisoned or Bleeding State.

Should I stop them?

— No, let’s wait and see for a while longer. Fran is intent on landing at least one blow in this battle.

“Now!”

Fran moved. To Amanda, who activated another Whip Technique, she stepped forward by force. At onlooker might see it as desperation, but I know that’s not the case.

“Gu...!”

The whip, thrust forward, scrapes out Fran’s side. Blood dances in the air as it escapes the open wound, but Fran, who pushes her back by force with Wind Magic, advances with a grimace.

“As expected of you!”

“Ha.....!”

Using half of her remaining magic, Fran lunges with her whole body. It isn’t a Sword Technique, but its offensive power is probably equivalent to one.

Furthermore, there was no time for Amanda to pull back her whip for the sake of a counterattack.

“Wind • Shield!”

GYyYyan!*

With a high-pitched sound, the blow which had Fran’s whole body invested in it was... Prevented. Wind Magic, which Amanda hadn’t used up until this point, had nullified it. It goes without saying that it was only used because Amanda had been driven into a corner. However, Fran’s aim was to land a single blow. She won’t be satisfied with just this.

And so, Fran released the magic she had reserved: Flare • Blast.

It was launched immediately after defensive magic was used. Even Amanda wouldn’t be able to reactivate a proper defensive measure in time.

[Splendid!]

Throughout the entire battle, I had been chanting Arias with Parallel Thought to see what times I could potentially land a blow, and in my opinion, that was the best timing thus far.

“Kuu!”

GaG00000N

With Amanda hit directly by Flare • Blast, a great explosion ensued. A cloud of dust, kicked up as though a bomb had detonated, covers the entire area. The ground around us melts, becoming something akin to lava. Just how hot is it, I wonder?

She isn't dead, right? She's an A Rank, but the explosion just now was a bit dangerous..... There was a time when I thought so.

What manner of magic would it take for her to remain unscathed? Not only that, to be in perfect condition! No matter how you look at it, this woman's too far out of the norm! I know that there's Fire Resistance and all, but to that extent?!

“That was dangerous.....”

“Nn..... Regret...ful...”

dosa

With that, Fran collapses with a look of vexation. With such excessive bleeding, there's no question that she had become light-headed. And so, reaching the limit of her endurance, Fran went unconscious on the spot.

[How regretful..... Still, you've done well.]

It was good to have fought against this monster of an opponent here. Furthermore, she did it without my assistance.

“Fran! I’m so sorry!”

Amanda approaches the collapsed Fran in a hurry, and takes out a Potion before sprinkling it on Fran. Without a doubt, it’s a first-class Life Potion.

“As a reward for your perseverance you should have landed that strike, but... Grace of the Spirits protected me automatically.”

I see, so it was thanks to Grace of the Spirits. It seems to be a Skill which automatically invalidates damage to a certain degree. It’s an extremely strong Skill, but it has the drawback of needing 24 hours to reuse.

Fran might be unconvinced, but I think that her strike was definitely a good one, one that invoked the absolute defense of her opponent.

Well, for now, rest well. As for the watch..... The others can take care of it. Probably.

CHAPTER 49

LESSONS FROM MS. AMANDA

～ THE SO-CALLED EXPLANATION-TIME ～

It's been one hour since Fran's sparring match and defeat with Amanda.

After waking up, Fran took a seat face-to-face with Amanda. As Amanda was feeling apologetic for letting the battle escalate so far, it was decided that she would teach us some of the information we wanted to know.

As Fran was able to learn a lot through the battle, I don't really think that there was a need take over Fran's watch and personally guard her while she slept as well as grant us this, but... Since it's already like this, we've might as well accept it, right?

"Then, first I'll explain fighting Skills."

"Please."

"However, I'm not too strong when it comes to theories, so I won't be able to explain everything. Is that alright?"

"That's fine."

To us who know near-nothing, any information is precious.

"Then, Combat Arts are things like Sword Arts, which allow one to improve their handling with a respective weapon; these improvements can also be seen with Techniques. Combat Techniques like Sword Techniques, Pugilist Techniques, and my preferred Whip Techniques all hold special moves that consume one's magical power. Did you know of that?"

"Nn. I know."

Sword Arts is required to learn Sword Techniques, and Bow Arts is required to learn Bow Techniques. Furthermore, it's impossible to learn Combat Techniques at a higher level than their respective Combat Arts, making the two a pair. In other words, one must bear in mind that if their Sword Arts is only Lv5, they can only level Sword Techniques up to Lv5.

"After that is only a matter of learning how to use Combat Techniques themselves, but....."

"Nn."

"Well, I'm not really clear on the details surrounding that."

"Eh?"

"No, well, the methods to learn can be grasped through training, but... I don't really know the *detailed theory* around it. If you ask someone researching the subject, you might be able to understand it a bit better."

"Just training method is fine."

"That's usually how it is for Adventurers. Anyways, I suppose for that I should talk about the prerequisites of Vigor Manipulation and Magic Manipulation? As for the reason for needing them..... To be frank, I don't know why either. As a Half-Elf, I gained both of them before I could remember. Well, it seems that Fran didn't have any problems with them either, so shall I simply omit it?"

"Nn. Don't mind."

"Then, moving onto the training method for Combat Techniques, just envision yourself pouring your magic into the weapon as well as your body. Then, like a flash, Combat Techniques arrive. The Techniques themselves are activated when you don't go against that flash. After the first use, the Technique is acquired in the form of a Skill of sorts, so there's no problem using it from that point on. Fran can use Combat Techniques too, so do you remember acquiring them?"

"?"

"Well, Fran is still small, so you probably learned your Combat Techniques when you were even younger, right? It's possible that you've forgotten. Still, to be able to use Combat Techniques at such a young age, you're pretty prodigious, huh."

Dangerous. We were saved by the fact that Fran's a child. Anyways, in regards to the method of obtaining Combat Techniques, I have a rough idea of how it works. With this, not only Sword Arts, but Sword Techniques should also be able to be trained

manually.

“Once a Combat Technique has been learned, you should continuously use it to raise the Skill’s level. The reason being each time a level goes up in a form of Combat Techniques, a new Technique is learned.”

Lv1 must be the most difficult to raise, then.

“Next, shall I move onto the description of Magic?”

“Nn.”

“In Magic, the basic attributes are Soil, Water, Fire, and Wind. Their superior versions are Ground, Ocean, Flame, and Storm respectively.”

All four of the basic attributes can be used already.

“After those are what are called ‘composite attributes’. Those are Lightning, Ice, Nature, Lava, Sandstorm, and Life: those 6.”

“Composite?”

“Yes. You can acquire those attributes after improving two of the basic attributes. For example, Nature Magic requires Water and Soil Magic.”

“Possible to learn? Or not?”

“Well, I’ll get to that.”

To learn Magic, one can either become a pupil of an experienced magician, or learn it through means of memorization, or... Well, there’re various methods.

Amanda seemed to have learned how to use magic through memorization and training. However, the training method is quite terrific. What makes it terrific is the fact that the method itself closely resembles the practices of a certain Hunter×Hunter^[1].

For Water Magic, one has to touch water every day, drink it, soak in it, and hammer

the essence of water into one's mind and body. When water flows even in one's dreams, then it becomes possible to learn Water Magic.

If it's Wind Magic, then running about naked in strong gales would work. For Soil, you'd just need to be buried under the ground, or take bites out of stones. Well, such training might be a bit excessive, so only *some* magicians do such things... Was it my imagination that Amanda's eyes swam for a moment? She would have trained for the Wind, so.....

Anyways, unlike Sword Arts, there seems to be no guarantee that magic can be learned, the reason being 'The Wall of Talent'. For Sword Arts, even if there's a difference in the effort needed between individuals, anyone can learn and improve through proper dedication. In Magic, however, if you don't have talent, you can't acquire it. Period.

"Talent?"

"Yeah. It might be better to say that each person has a certain compatibility with each attribute. For a person incompatible with the Fire Attribute, no matter how much effort they put into learning Fire Magic, they won't be able to do so."

So, without talent, no matter how much training one does, it would all be to waste? Even with the dedication to burn oneself, it'd be possible to achieve no results... How terrible.

"Currently there isn't a method of examining which attributes one has a talent for, however, I don't think a person with absolutely *no* talent exists, so it'd be possible to learn Magic so long as one keeps at it."

"Depends on efforts."

"That's how it is. Incidentally, I had attempted to train myself for Fire, but I wasn't able to learn it in the end. Instead, it seemed that I had talent for Wind, so I was able to learn it in about a week."

"I see."

"It seems that there're also cases of geniuses capable of using Magic ever since they were born too, I think? I wonder if Fran's one such case?"

“Nn?”

“You can’t remember, huh. Well, that’s fine. Returning to the subject of composite attributes, there’re two main issues in acquiring them.”

“Have to learn two attributes first.”

“Right. After that, there’s the question of whether you have talent for the *composite attribute* itself.”

Because of those two things, composite attributes are extremely rare. Until now, the only composite attribute we’ve seen has been Nature Magic from both the Guild Master and Frion... Both of which are Wood Elves. Because of that, I’m under the impression that aptitude towards Nature Magic simply came to them due to their Race. If that’s the case, then it’s simply to be expected that composite attributes aren’t seen often.

“And so, composite attributes are very rare.”

As for Fran, I wonder where her talent lies? Magic shared by me is usable without a problem for the four basic attributes; Dark and Recovery Magic are also the same. In that case, perhaps Skills gained through a shared relationship disregard talent. No matter how you look at it, it’d be highly irregular for her to have talent in all 4 attributes, after all...

“Next, I’ll explain the rest of the attributes.”

“Dark and Recovery?”

“Just like those. First, let’s start with Light and Dark.”

The Light and Dark attributes aren’t included among the four basic ones. While the methods to attain them doesn’t differ with the basic four, they’re exempted simply due to the overwhelmingly few amount of people with talent for them.

Surprisingly, they’re even rarer than those with talent with Composite Magic, making the order of rarity 4 Basic → Composite → Light and Dark. Being able to acquire Dark Magic from the Demon was extremely lucky.

“With the inclusion of Light and Dark, there’re even more attributes to be derived. The derivations of Light are Purification and Illusion while Dark can be derived into Poison and Ghost.”

Everyone with talent for the Light attribute will also have talent with Purification and Illusion without exception. Similarly, talent in the Poison and Ghost attributes is also guaranteed if one has talent with Dark, so the derivation attributes are actually seen as subordinate-attributes in the eyes of researchers. Also, having talent with the derived attributes doesn’t necessarily mean that an individual will have talent in the Dark or Light attributes themselves.

Furthermore, Poison and Purification have higher attributes: Decay and Cleansing.^[2] There’re way too many magic attributes.

“Other than those, there’re also unique attributes.”

The unique attributes include Recovery, Support, Summoning, Contract, Space-Time, Moonlight, Spirit, Smithing, and other non-generic ones. Practitioners of Support and Recovery Magic seem to be plentiful, but when it comes to attributes like Space-Time and Moonlight, their rarity surpasses even Light and Dark.

“Those’re only the ones off the top of my head, but there’re many other unique attributes scattered across the world. There seem to be attributes unique to Demonic Beasts, too.”

“Such as?”

“Well, rumors have it that Dragons possess magic only usable by themselves. There’s a similar case said about Fiends and such. Compared with mankind, Demonic Beasts that can use magic outnumber us by a wide margin, after all.”

“Why?”

“Well, in the first place, Demonic Beasts make use of magic on a daily basis. Demonic Beasts larger than castles would be killed off in no time if they didn’t reinforce their bodies with magic, right? To them, magic is second nature — like breathing. Because of that, Demonic Beasts can use Magic even without Magic Manipulation, unlike

mankind. Their Magic Stones might also have a hand in that, too... But of course, there're also ones that have Magic Manipulation as well, further increasing their efficiency."

"I see."

"It's the same with Combat Techniques. Even with differences between Vigor Manipulation and Magic Manipulation, in the end, aren't they simply Skills making use of magic? Because of that, Demonic Beasts can make use of Combat Techniques without Vigor Manipulation."

I suppose Skills like Vibration Fang would fall under that category?

"And, due to the Demonic Beasts' peculiar magic-oriented nature, there're many individuals capable of using Light and Dark attributes too. Looking at it like that, they're far more talented than mankind."

That reminds me, there's still one thing that I've been wondering about.

"Is Dark Magic only used by bad people?"

The Demon made use of it, and Poison and Ghost Magic are the types used by villains no matter how you look at it. If it was me, I wouldn't be able to trust a practitioner of Ghost Magic on our first meeting no matter what. They'd be an evil person, after all. Or... I'd imagine them to be so, anyways.

"That's not the case. Demonic Beasts may make use of it, and civilians might think that it's inherently bad, but... For Adventurers, magic of all kinds is generally recognized as 'useful'. For example, Ghost Magic is really useful in Dungeon exploration, you know?"

Alright. In that case we can make use of Darkness Magic without a problem. With that, Darkness Reinforcement and other such Skills won't simply be left to collect dust.

Finally, we asked about the combinations of complex attributes.

- Water + Soil = Nature
- Water + Wind = Ice
- Water + Fire = Life
- Wind + Fire = Lightning
- Wind + Soil = Sandstorm
- Soil + Fire = Lava.

Those are the combinations.

As for the composite attributes between Light and Dark as well as unique attributes, they have yet to be confirmed.

“Well, I don’t know of them, at least.”

“I want a composite attribute.”

“Fran made use of Soil and Wind magic a while back, and you’re good with Fire too, right? With those, it’s possible to aim for Lightning, Sandstorm, and Lava.”

“Nn. I’ll do my best.”

Alright, if that’s what Fran wants then we’ll obtain one without fail!

I could learn a composite attribute through absorbing one, or through manual acquisition. I was able to learn Flame Magic through Fire Magic Lv10, so the possibility of a composite attribute being learned through raising the levels of other magics is high.

[As it stands..... The attribute second to Fire is Wind.]

In the Goblin Den, Wind Magic Lv3 was repeatedly obtained through absorbing the stones of Army Beetles. The efficiency of absorbing higher-leveled Skills is better than lower-leveled ones, after all.

Raising Wind Magic through the insects’ Lv3 versions took far less time than

advancing Sword Arts through the Goblins' Lv1 versions.

[What shall we do..... Perhaps we should give it a level or two?]

47 Self-Evolution Points remain. We should leave 28 of those for the sake of testing out the Superior version of Sword Arts.

[What do you think?]

(What to do?)

In the end, we used 6 Points to raise Wind Magic's level. As we attained the Lightning Attribute properly, I have no regrets. Furthermore, the Storm Attribute and Master of Wind Titles were also obtained.

(Want to use it quickly.)

[Not here. We only just heard about Composite Attributes from Amanda, so somehow using one immediately would be bad.]

(Alright.....)

[When we return to Aressa, let's test it out. Alright?]

"Nn."

CHAPTER 50

TRAPS AND TRICKS

It's the second day of the Dungeon Investigation.

"Alright, we've broken through 5 layers."

Our group has already finished exploring four layers.

As for any problems: there haven't been many. Clad, most likely due to the effect of yesterday's defeat, has remained quiet. No, perhaps his silence is due to the shock of witnessing the spar between Fran and Amanda when he woke up? Well... It serves him right either way.

Still, Amanda's approach for 'training' was quite terrifying... The spar was fierce, and I could only witness Fran being beaten half to death too. When her side was practically gauged out my guts went cold... Not that I have any guts, of course!

There're many metaphorical expressions that use parts of the body, so it's quite difficult to use them for me who is inorganic. Still, that doesn't matter. The point is, I was a tad worried.

It was good that we were able to see the strength of an A Rank Adventurer firsthand, so while Fran was a bit vexed with the result, she doesn't seem to have started disliking Amanda. Rather than seeing her as an opponent who she narrowly escaped death from, it's more likely that Fran is viewing her as another wall to someday climb over. Testament to that is the sense of goodwill I can feel from her towards Amanda.

As for Amanda herself, it seemed that the spar from last night was satisfactory. She had lamented the fact that she could easily defeat common Adventurers simply by wielding a Whip, but with Fran's high prowess in evasive maneuvers and attack even she would be in danger if she relaxed.

It was because of this that the morning was noisy with her request to spar again... Even to Cruz and Frion, the spar between Amanda and Fran was like something from a different dimension.

They didn't particularly change their attitude towards Fran, but pieces of their actions and language indicated a slight feeling of awe towards Fran. With that, it seems that they've fully recognized her strength.

Surprisingly enough, something akin to kindness was even felt from Cruz. Perhaps he's finally realized that the one he lost to was Rank D? Or perhaps he's the type of person who would only accept another after measuring their strength firsthand. How manly, Cruz. However, Fran is off-limits!

Moving on, layers 1 to 4 didn't have any strong opponents and the traps were few, so we simply proceeded without pause for the most part. The Demonic Beasts themselves were Insect-type, so while it's a shame, I couldn't obtain any new Skills from them.

"Now, just a reminder, Trap Spiders will be appearing from now on."

"Nn."

"If we're surrounded it'll get troublesome, so be careful."

Becoming bound by thread is more than enough to lead to defeat — even if your opponent is weak.

"At the same time, the number of traps will increase. The Transition Traps are particularly dangerous, so prepare accordingly. Rather than focusing on the detection of enemies, I'd like to ask everyone with the Thief Job to focus on finding traps."

And so, with Thieves as the lead, we plunge into the fifth layer. In case of combat, Warriors step forward, with the Magicians providing support from behind.

The materials capable of being gathered from the Spiders, being quite strong for their rank, have moderate value. Their utility is also a part of that. However, they're weak to fire and burn up easily, so we'll be refraining from fire-type Magic as much as possible. Instead, Fran wields me.

Like this, traversing the 5th Layer can be done without a problem. Well, that's only to be expected with this much fighting power on our side.

However... We immediately encountered a problem after delving into the 6th Layer.

"Shit, e'en though they're jus' small fries!"

"They aren't falling, even with Spirit Magic...? This can't be!"

The Trap Spiders have suddenly become stronger. Not only their size, their increase in vitality is also plainly visible. Perhaps the deeper we delve, the stronger they will become?

After using Appraisal, I can only be surprised by their Name and Description.

[Fran, these aren't Trap Spiders, they're Trick Spiders, their evolution!]

At a glance, a Trick Spider only seems to be a large Trap Spider, but their contents are entirely different. They're the products of Highbreeds that have evolved, after all. The Threat Level of a single Trick Spider is E.

As for their Status, their offensive power is more than double what we've been facing thus far. Furthermore, they make use of Confusion Poison, and even have the Deadly Poison Fang Skill. It seems that the number of Adventurers who mistook them for Trap Spiders and attacked them only to lose their lives in the process aren't few.

"Gennell! What's wrong?!"

"I... I don't know... I've tried using an Anti-Venom, but it's not working..."

So someone got hit, huh... The Poison from Trap Spiders is very weak, so if one swallowed a 5th Grade Anti-Venom it wouldn't be a problem. And so, mistaking the Trick Spiders for Trap Spiders, they must have continued fighting while swallowing low-class Anti-Venoms, thus falling prey to the deadly poison.

[Fran. These guys are dangerous.]

"Nn."

When Fran takes even the smallest scratch, I immediately apply Antidote^[1] — a technique that can even nullify Sovereign Poison completely.

"I-I'm saved!"

"Thank you very much."

"Nn. Trick Spiders. Strong Poison."

"Wha-! Trick Spiders?! Impossible! Did evolution occur?!"

In truth, Trick Spiders aren't supposed to be created in this cave. The strongest of this Dungeon's Demonic Beasts were supposed to be Trap Spiders.

However, if several factors overlapped then evolution, an occurrence surpassing one's expectations, can happen.

Those factors start with the birth of an individual too strong for its species. Although it is brought forth by the power of the Dungeon, there are individual differences between each Dungeon Monster. Demonic Beasts with more power than other individuals — sometimes labeled as Unique or Rare individuals — are more than capable of appearing.

And when a powerful individual is born, what do you think happens? It takes a monopoly of the food, forcing the weaker individuals to either cannibalism or starvation. There is the possibility of the strong individual to evolve after eating enough food... But there is also the possibility for a weaker specimen evolving through

its survival and cannibalism.

There have been cases where both sides evolve only to eradicate one another, but there have also been cases where the evolved individuals live symbiotically, changing the entire Dungeon ecosystem.

Furthermore, there're cases where the accidental ingestion of experience-rich food, or external factors leading to evolution.

Well, in the case of a captured Dungeon, the latter two cases are pretty improbable.

"Damn, we were careless! Ms. Amanda!"

"I understand. Fran, will you be coming as well?"

"Nn."

That marked the beginning of a one-sided slaughter. In an instant, we began reducing the number of Trick Spiders that the Rank E Adventurers were having trouble with. In only minutes, the cluster of ~20 spiders transformed into nothing more than a pile of silent corpses.

"Fighting against small fries really is boring. Right, Fran?"

"*Nh-nn*. Fun."

"Oh, is that so? Well, so long as Fran had fun it's fine."

While Fran has an enjoyable expression, the rest of the Adventurers have looks of fatigue. Even Clad seems to be nearing his limit.

"Let's pull back to the 5th Layer! Those guys shouldn't follow us there!"

Unless they've overpopulated or received instructions from a Dungeon Master, Dungeon Monsters are restricted to their own Layer. And so, the Trick Spiders shouldn't be able to give chase after we reach the 5th Layer.

“If they’re already breeding, this is pretty dangerous.”

“We know already!”

“Fran, act as the rearguard.”

“Nn.”

“E Rank Parties, withdraw!”

“G-Got i- **Gyaa!**”

“C-Calm down! ‘S just a scratch!”

“There’re more ‘hind us!”

“S only *one*! Jus’ don’t make any noise!”

“H-Here they come again!”

Falling into a panic were some of Clad’s party members from Roar of the Dragon. Not only do they not seem to be accustomed to being surrounded by Demonic Beasts, they’ve taken on the Status Abnormality: Confusion.

“Just wait a sec!”

“S-Shut it!”

Clad is just barely retaining his fighting spirit as two of his subordinates, ones who took a surprise attack from the rear, blindly ran towards the swarm of spiders ahead.

“Wait! There might be traps over there!”

And so, sure enough, by running into the area that the Thieves hadn’t scanned yet they triggered traps.

KYUIIIIIIN

“That... Was that a Transition Trap?”

“Not good–”

With that, Fran disappeared.

I, who should have been in her hand, was left behind.

[*Eh?* Fran?]

“Fran!”

CHAPTER 51

ITS NAME IS URUSHI

Fran disappeared.

She disappeared by getting caught in a Transition Trap that one of Clad's companions set off!

The weapons of the two others who were caught in the trap were also left in place, just like I was. Not only their Spears, Daggers and Throwing Knives were also left behind. Similarly, Fran's throwing equipment alongside the Dagger of the Sovereign Serpent fell beside me as well.

"Forced cancellation of equipped weapons...?"

"Even the spare weapons were left behind..."

I had heard about the *range* of the Transition Trap beforehand, but they even force the cancellation of equipped weapons? If the trap was that dangerous, why wasn't that mentioned in the explanation?! *Shit*, for even the registration to disappear...! P-Please... Stay alive... **No**, it'll be alright. She *should* be alright.

What can I do? There must be some way to look for Fran..... There should be something capable of doing so in my various Detection Skills!

"Ridiculous! I've ne'er heard a' such a brutal trap existin' in this Dungeon!"

"That ain't a trap that should be in a Dungeon of this Rank!"

Cruz was also caught by surprise. Apparently, the trap doing this really was a bolt out of the blue.

"..... I think I know how this happened."

“What, what do you know?”

“The Trick Spiders have a Highbreed variant called the Trickster Spider, which are known to have the Trap Remodeling Skill.”

Trap Remodeling? In other words, they can modify the traps in the Dungeon? What a troublesome Demonic Beast! Even more, the they’re Highbreeds of *Trick Spiders*? Isn’t that bad?

“It was already irregular that Trick Spiders showed up, right? If Trickster Spiders are present as well, it’s not a huge surprise.”

“*Ku...* Izel, the Map!”

“I’ve already checked it. If the terrain’s remained the same, there should be a small room up ahead.”

“I’m going!”

After picking up the Dagger of the Sovereign Serpent and I, Amanda breaks into a run. I’ll remain quiet for now.

Spiders in the surroundings pounce at Amanda all at once. *Oi, oi*. It hasn’t even been 24 hours yet! Without Grace of the Spirits, Amanda won’t be able to revive! Even if it’s Amanda, this number is–!

“Nuisances.”

ZAN!

Amanda’s right hand blurs, and even the Spiders that hadn’t jumped at her in the surroundings burst open instantly. One strike. With only one strike, the Spiders were wiped out. I’ve made lightly of Amanda yet again. I wasn’t even able to see her attack just now. Like this, she never got serious in her battle with Fran either, huh.

After a minute, we arrive at the small room. Naturally, we do so without triggering any traps.

“Fran!”

“Victor! Bart!”

However, there was no one else inside the room.

“Even the destination of the Transition Trap was changed, it seems...”

“Shit! Th’ hell are we gonna do?!”

“We should split up and look around. However, it’d be nothing but suicide if we divided our numbers too much in the current situation. Izel, Clad, members of Roar of the Dragon and I will form a unit. Rigg and the Eyes of the Forest will form the second. Finally, Amanda will move herself, with that, we’ll have three groups.

“G-Got it.”

“Let’s go!”

With that, the Adventurers move out... But Amanda stays in place. Leaning me against the wall, she closes her eyes and concentrates. It doesn’t seem like she’s using Wind Magic...

Ah, she must be thinking about a method of searching for Fran. I can’t just leave this situation to the Adventurers. I have to do my best as well.

Telepathy is — useless. Because my Equipment Registration has been cut off, my connection to Fran was completely severed. Usually, thanks to that connection I would be able to use Telepathy even if she was far away, but... I can’t feel Fran right now. To become so uneasy simply by having our connection dissipate...! No, the anxiety Fran is feeling likely trumps mine, I must calm down!

If only I had an Art related to Transition, or something like a spatial leap... Anything would be fine so long as I could fly to Fran. Or, perhaps a Skill that can return Fran to me..... Are there any good Spells that can be used?

No, wait. Pulling Fran back just might be possible with *Summon Kin*. Fran is contracted

by me, so even if our Equipment Registration was dissolved, the contract remains! And, I think I can say that Fran is my kin.....

However, I've neglected verifying Summon Kin's effects after its level had risen. I couldn't summon anything when it was Level 1, and even after its level improved, because I don't make contracts I figured it would be a waste of time. Thus, I didn't check. However, things may have changed with the Skill's raise in level. Even if the possibility is small, I'm clinging at straws here.

Is Fran's name here—?

Hm?

Fran's name isn't listed, but instead the list of 'kin' I can summon are a bunch of individuals that I don't know about.

Summonable Kin: Wolf, Gray Wolf, Brown Wolf, Red Wolf, Blue Wolf, Green Wolf, Yellow Wolf, Black Wolf, Ruby Wolf, Emerald Wolf, Thunder Wolf, Onyx Wolf

What on earth is this? A wolf festival? I don't understand. I don't remember contracting such beings at all.

For now, I should look at the details of each individual.

The first Wolf is just a common wolf. The Grey and Brown Wolves are simply wolves that evolved from regular wolves after specializing in AGI and STR respectively. The Red, Blue, Green, and Yellow Wolves are wolves that can control the attributes of Fire, Water, Wind and Soil respectively. The Black Wolf controls Darkness and Poison.

The Ruby Wolf is the Flame attribute Highbreed of a Red Wolf. Similarly, Emerald is the Storm attribute, and the Thunder Wolf is Lightning. The Onyx Wolf seems to be a Highbreed of the Black Wolf with control over the Darkness, Poison, and Ghost attributes.

Although there're various other features, my eyes remain on one of the abilities of the Onyx Wolf. That is, the Life Perception Skill! Moreover, the Red Wolf and any proceeding wolves have the Echolocation and Keen Smell Skills. So, if it's an Onyx Wolf, will it be able to find Fran?

With that thought, I decide to choose the Onyx Wolf instead of the others.

[—Summon • Onyx Wolf!]

To make sure that a strong individual appears, I pour the maximum amount of MP into the summon. I don't know how much of an effect it'll have, but...

“Gururuu”

From a magic formation appearing out of thin air, a Wolf with jet-black fur springs out.

I-It's a bit bigger than expected. Considerably so. I thought it would be about the size of a big dog, but..... This fellow is more comparable to the size of a cow.

“An Onyx Wolf? In a place like this...?”

Dangerous. I completely forgot about Amanda. She's super surprised. *Eh?* If it's like this, then won't it just be subjugated...?

It's releasing a terrific amount of magic from its entire body while growling all the while as a form of intimidation... No matter how you look at it, this wolf is a hostile Demonic Beast!

“Grrrrrrrr.....”

Please stop. Why are you growling so much? And stop releasing your magic!

[Oi, stop growling! Behave yourself!]

“Gururr!”

It's no use. It's like it's not even listening. Should I try even harder to persuade it? Or rather, why does it look like it's suffering? Just what's going on?

Name : None

Race : Onyx Wolf : Demonic Wolf : Demonic Beast

State : Contracted, Magic Power Discharge

Status: Level 1

HP : 319 MP : 313 STR : 146 END : 156 AGI : 251 INT : 103 MGC : 201

DEX : 128

State : Magic Power Discharge? That is-! That must be the reason why its magic is being dispersed all the time! Ah, is that because of me? Is it because I put too much magic power into the summoning?

<Will you perform<**Christening**>on the Onyx Wolf?>

At a time like this?! Should I give it a name? Let me see, a name... A name...

[Your name is **Urushi**^[1]!]

Jet Black contains the character Urushi^[2], and the dark red hairs occasionally mixed in with its mane is also associated with the lacquer tree. Furthermore, the wolf has control over the Poison attribute, which relates to how a lacquer tree can give one a rash. Even though I thought about it in the spur of the moment, I think it's a good name.

<<**Christening**>of the Onyx Wolf complete>

<Onyx Wolf is evolving>

Eh? Evolution? I only named it, though? What's going on? Is it because its magic is running out of control? Can someone explain what's happening?

As I thought such things, the Onyx Wolf in front of me transformed just as the announcement said it would.

<Urushi has evolved into a Darkness Wolf>

"A000000000!"

It's lively all of a sudden. Is its magic discharge alright?

Name : Urushi

Race : Darkness Wolf : Demonic Wolf : Demonic Beast

State : Contracted

Status: Level 1

HP : 451 MP : 670 STR : 216 END : 217 AGI : 310 INT : 202 MGC : 441
DEX : 208

Skills:

Darkness Resistance : Lv8, Darkness Magic : Lv1, Keen Smell : LvMax, Stealth : Lv7,
Fang Techniques : Lv5, Fang Arts : Lv5, Shadow Lurk : LvMax, Shadow Movement :
Lv5, Aerial Jump : Lv8, Dread : Lv4, Vigilance : Lv6, Conceal Presence : Lv6,
Playback : Lv5, Decay Magic : Lv1, Instantaneous Movement : Lv5, Action Muffling :
Lv6, Ghost Magic : Lv5, Life Perception : Lv7, Mental Resistance : Lv6, Poison Magic
: LvMax, Echolocation : Lv7, Roar : Lv8, Night Cover : LvMax, Dark Magic : LvMax,
Night Vision, Sovereign Toxic Fangs, Automatic HP Recovery, Automatic MP Recovery,
Poison Immunity, Shapeshift, Magic Manipulation

Unique Skills:

Predation Absorption

Titles:

Kin of the Sword, Kin of the Wolf God

Description:

A Highbreed Wolf Demonic Beast capable of manipulating the Darkness attribute. Its Status is low compared to other Demonic Beasts of the same rank, but its Skill and Magic diversity is top-class. With many Skills related to stealth, especially the ability to hide and move within shadows, these Demonic Beasts are very difficult to find. Their existence has been confirmed, but there have been very few discoveries. Threat Level C.

Magic Stone Location : Heart Cavity

This fellow is huge. It was already quite large as an Onyx Wolf, but now it's at least twice that size. Onyx was cattle-rank, but the tip of a Darkness Wolf's foot to their shoulder exceeds 3 meters.

A sense of dignity flows from its deep, gold eyes as it glares at the surroundings. Its fangs are as sharp as daggers, and its limbs are more burly than even a bear's. Its black hair is the only thing that it kept through its evolution, sparkling with a peculiar gleam. It resembles the sky of a starry night, shimmering depending on the angle it's seen from, and holding a mysterious beauty.

In addition, it's quite strong. Its Threat Level is C. Also, as its description said, its stealth-related Skills are quite considerable, with an Assassin-like Skill configuration. Its magic is also quite substantial.

When I compare it to the Tyrant Saber of the same rank it's inferior physically, but their magic are leagues apart. That's how it is.



“Abrupt evolution? Could this be... A Darkness Wolf? It’s my first time seeing one...”

For even Amanda to only see it for the first time, is a Darkness Wolf *that* rare?

“Moreover, there’s a flow of magic connected to Fran’s sword?”

Ugee... It was completely seen through! The danger towards Urushi fell, but I have a feeling that her interest towards me rose in return...

“Amazing... I knew that it was a Magic Sword, but to think that it was a Demonic Beast Weapon..... Furthermore, you don’t see one with a Demonic Beast of Threat Level C lodged inside every day.”

Demonic Beast Weapon? Judging by her words, it seems to be a weapon that Demonic Beasts reside within. *Hmm*, so there’re weapons like that too...

Ah, not now, ***Fran!***

[Urushi, can you understand me? If you do, raise your right paw.]

“Oon”

sa

Urushi raises its right forepaw.

[Next, your left hind leg.]

“Oon”

[Alright, this time raise your left forepaw and right hind leg at the same time. Can you do that?]

“UoOon”

Well, it seems that it can understand my words. In addition, I feel that I can understand Urushi's feelings somehow or another. A sense of motivation is currently coming from it. Perhaps that's thanks to Telepathy?

I'll disregard Amanda muttering "C-Cute..." for now.

[Do you know where Fran is? She is my wielder.]

"Oon"

Urushi smells me with a **kun-kun**, then closes its eyes for a couple of seconds and howls **woo-woo**. It seems to have been using its Skills one way or another.

[Well?]

"Aoo —on!"

Urushi howls loudly before biting onto my handle and lifting me up.

[I'm not heavy?]

"Hwuoon!"

Because I'm in its mouth its bark sounds a bit silly, but because Urushi is huge, even if I'm being lifted with its mouth there doesn't seem to be a problem.

With that, Urushi runs through the cave with a terrifying speed. Please be safe, Fran!

[Alright Urushi, hurry!]

"Huohuon!"

CHAPTER 52

HEADING FOR FRAN

Urushi, who is holding me in its mouth, runs vigorously. Will I be able to reunite with Fran just like this? No, wait, isn't this bad?

"Wait! There's a trap!"

Amanda shouts such words from behind. The worst possible outcome would be to have a Transition Trap activate right now.

[Urushi, because there're traps here be careful!]

"Ohwn?"

[You're unconcerned?]

That's right, it has Aerial Jump Lv8, doesn't it. So long as it doesn't step on the trap, it won't be activated. Furthermore, there seems to be magical power within Urushi's eyes. I believe it's Dark Magic, but... Hmm.

Perhaps it's a magic that allows one to see the locations of traps? That would explain why Urushi occasionally makes unnatural movements, seemingly avoiding something. Well, regardless, it seems that it has a trap-sensory system in place.

No traps have been activated at all thus far. However, after running about 300 meters from the small room, Urushi suddenly stops in place.

[Urushi?]

"Hwoon?"

[Where is Fran?]

Urushi places me on the ground and sits down in place.

*“*Hah-hah-hah-hah*”*

[Not **hah-hah** –]

*“On**Oon!**”*

All of a sudden, Urushi starts scratching at the wall, digging with great vigor.

[*Eh?* Is she perhaps on the other side of that wall?]

“Ohn”

“Is Fran over there, by any chance?”

With a face of astonishment, Amanda approaches. Or rather, how the heck did she manage to keep up with Urushi?! — No, in terms of AGI Amanda should be higher, so perhaps that’s only natural?

“——Wind • Vortex!”

Using Storm Magic, Amanda shatters the wall.

[A hidden passage!]

“This Dungeon... It’s because of places like this that I hate it. Even detection spells from Wind Magic wouldn’t have worked.”

This place must be an end location for Transition Traps, one meant solely for imprisoning people.

I’ve searched for presences within, but I can only feel signs of Spiders. Is she really there? I can only feel an indescribable sense of unease.

[Urushi, *go!*]

“Oon!”

Urushi uses Aerial Jump and runs nimbly over the ground.

[There!]

Amazing, Urushi! She really was here! I can see Fran!

However–

[S-She is... Fighting...?]

Fran was at the far end of the passage, alive and moving.

However, she was surrounded by small spiders. Spider larvae, most likely. Those spiders clustered around Fran one after another. Even if they're weak alone, their number is clearly dangerous!

[Urushi, hurry!]

“Hwon!”

However, I notice something strange. In Fran's hand is something akin to a dagger, a weapon that she shouldn't have had. What is that? Fran should have been unarmed... Was luck on her side, allowing her to find it from a treasure chest?

No, that's not the case. It seems to be the Hidden Claw Necklace that we took from Gyuran. If it's imbued with magic power a dagger-like claw protrudes from the inside, but its efficiency isn't good.

[Run away, Fran!]

It's no use. She's not within the range of Telepathy yet. But why is she not running away...? The reason why Fran refused to escape despite being surrounded by spiders was clear after taking a closer look.

Behind her were the figures of two fallen Humans. They were Clad's party members who had transitioned together.

Fran was trying to protect them.

[Fran!]

Damn, these small fry spiders are irritating! Even if I try to use Magic, because these guys' webs are in the way the spiders surrounding Fran wouldn't be affected in the slightest.

[The level of your Sword Arts is low, Fran!]

Fighting in such a state is suicide!

I could only watch as spiders jumped on Fran. Not good! The current Fran can't fight that number of — no. She can...?

Her movements are certainly slower, but the way she's wielding the blade isn't that bad. She cuts down a small spider and dodges the shot threads nimbly. Was Sword Arts Lv1 ever that strong? Ah, another one was cut down.

However, the cluster of small spiders remains on the offensive. Climbing along the wall, they've started aiming for the fainted Adventurers this time. Fran makes use of the Hidden Fang immediately, but it isn't enough to stop the spiders. All at once, the Spiders pounce.

[Fran, don't be reckless!]

Using her body as a shield, Fran puts her life on the line to protect the adventurers. With that, the fangs of the small spiders make their way into Fran's flesh.

Blood...! Furthermore, a big one has...! A parent spider?!

With the parent spider's momentum, she was thrown to the ground.

[U00ooooo! Mooveee!]

"00oon!"

CHAPTER 53

EXCEEDING THE LIMIT

Fran was overwhelmed by the parent spider. From the spider's mouth, sharp fangs are clearly visible.

The moment I saw those... My thoughts became seething.

Will I be exposed to Amanda? –Just what are you worrying about, foolish me! Focus on what's important!

[*U00ooooo! Mooveee!*]

"00oon!"

[—Fire • Javelin!]

Kyuiiiin — BOboOBoOBoON!

Urushi launches jet black arrows that mow down the spiders, and my spear of flame pierces through the obstructive cobwebs, setting them on fire in the process.

A little less than 20 spiders were obliterated all at once.

[Damn...!]

However, that was all.

Even more Spiders squirmed out at the end of the passage. Their flame resistance was considerably higher when compared to Trap Spiders.

[In that case—]

I'll just have to pierce through with Telekinesis Catapult! It had been 10 seconds since we found Fran, and since that time I've continued stockpiling Telekinesis. Doing so was subconscious. It had already been ingrained as a habit. Just like how a Swordsman would place their hand on their blade's handle at the first signs of battle, I stored Telekinesis.

However, until now I had hesitated to release it. I was mindful of Amanda, after all.

But it wasn't just that, either. Somewhere down the line I had started feeling that it would be useless. Because I clashed against the spiders of this Dungeon, I know firsthand the hardness of the spiders and the strength of their webs. And so, I came to the understanding that a simple Telekinesis Catapult wouldn't be enough to reach Fran.

And so, what was I to do?

[Just exceed the limit!]

I actually put the power of my usual Telekinesis Catapults to the 'limit' every time. They genuinely make use of my 'full power'.

However, is there really a limit? No. There has never been such a thing.

The 'limit' I've used thus far was placed by myself to secure a margin of safety. It was a limit placed so that I could come out of the attack unscathed. So, if that's how it is, then I'll simply remove the limiter.

Exceed the limit!

My magic power rushes wildly into my blade. Even I don't know how much magic I've channeled anymore! *However*, I'm still in control!

Not yet. I need more power! I cloak myself in flames using Sword Attribute, bringing it to the limits of my magic as well!

My blade becomes red-hot, glowing in the dark cave. Urushi, feeling the immense heat, releases me. I've reached a temperature that's started to slightly melt my blade, so that was obvious.

The spiders coming from the passage, sensing the oncoming catastrophe, spew thread towards me... But it's useless. Just by approaching my scathing form, the threads burn up and disappear.

[You spiders are a hindrance! ***Get out of my way!***]

Gyuud000ooo000ooo0!

I set off the accumulated Telekinesis, resulting in an explosion.

With unprecedented acceleration, I incinerate and pierce through the wall of spiderwebs. The multitude of strong cobwebs that had been set up were like paper. Even with the hard shell of a spider, once touched by my flames they became nothing but cinders.

If it was the usual Telekinesis Catapult, I would have been trapped in the thread halfway through... But not this time. With the intensity of the heat and shockwave, any spiders in my path were crushed.

And with that, I was able to pass through the defensive wall built by the spiders. Just as I did so, I invoked Telekinesis Catapult once more. However, this time it was facing the opposite direction.

[U00ooooaaah!]

Presently, I'm a cannonball. Even if I don't hit something directly, destruction spreads

through the shockwave alone. And so, if I got too close to Fran she would also be damaged. Therefore, my solution is to use Telekinesis to slam on the brakes. The cobwebs can also be used for this purpose.

[Get away from Fran, you damn spider!]

I rush directly to the parent spider and, as usual, pierce its magic stone. Overcome by the Telekinesis, the spider can only convulse before being blown away.

After that, I use Recovery Magic on Fran immediately.

[—Heal!]

It's a low-grade spell, but it prioritizes speed. She should be safe for the time being.

Now, how is she?

Name : Fran Age : 12

Race : Black Cat Beastman

Job : Magic Swordsman

State : Contracted • Poisoned (Deadly) • Light-headed

Status: Level : 25

HP : 106/250 MP : 31/166

STR : 120 END : 109 AGI : 110

INT : 75 MGC : 87 DEX : 88

Skills:

Stealth : Lv1, Court Etiquette : Lv4, Presence Perception : Lv1, Sword Techniques : Lv1, Sword_Arts : Lv3, Instantaneous Movement : Lv1, Cooking : Lv1, Insect Slayer, Vigor Manipulation, Goblin Slayer, Mental Stability, Demon Slayer, Skinning Expert, Indomitable Resolve, Directional Sense, Night Eyes

Titles:

Match for a Thousand, Insect Slayer, King of Dismantling, Master of Recovery, Goblin Slayer, One who Slaughters, Skill Collector, Dungeon Conquerer, Big Game Devourer, Demon Slayer, Master of Fire, Master of Wind, King of Cooking

Inflicted with Deadly Poison and Light-headedness, her remaining HP is 106. I need to heal her at once! Frantically, I use Antidote and Greater • Heal, bringing her to a perfect condition.

[*Fuu*... I can feel relieved with this.....]

Just in case, I use Heal and Antidote on Clad's comrades, too. They're idiots who rolled up Fran in their own mistakes, but I'll forgive them for the sake of Fran who risked her life for them.

For now, it seems she's fallen asleep, but what happened to the other spiders, I wonder?

"Auun?"

[Urushi, when did you—! Ah! Shadow Movement, huh.]

How dangerous, being able to surprise even me. I had completely forgotten! If we had made use of its Shadow Movement, it would have been far easier to arrive here.....

In the middle of the pile of spiders Urushi exterminated, it held something in its mouth. Oi, isn't that a spider leg?!

Haa... Just thinking about the food expenses for this fellow is going to give me a headache...

Well, it's good that it annihilated them at least.

[Fran. Fran?]

“..... *Nn?*”

[Are you awake?]

“Teacher?”

[*Ou.* Everything’s alright.]

“The spider?”

[It’s gone.]

“I see.”

That reminds me, when I looked at Fran’s Status she achieved Sword Arts Lv3. She even gained Sword Techniques and Vigor Manipulation. Incidentally, Instantaneous Movement and Cooking also showed up. When we met, she didn’t have such Skills. It seems that even with me Equipped, Fran will still gain proficiency.

Furthermore, even when the Set Skills disappeared her Titles remained. Master of Fire, for example.

However, isn’t her growth quite fast? In a month, her Sword Arts has improved by two Levels... Perhaps that’s due to my influence? Maybe using high-level Skills has a good effect on the growth of Skills in general?

Regardless, her gaining Skills is of little importance right now. Even without them, Fran’s fighting spirit still would have persisted, even while poisoned and surrounded by spiders.

[You did well.]

“Teacher: tattered.”

[Well... Only a little.]

The compensation for using magic power beyond the limit of a regular Telekinesis Catapult was larger than I thought.

Combined with the magic I used to slow myself down, I consumed more than 1,200 MP. That's more than four times the cost of a usual Telekinesis Catapult. On top of that, I only have 800 Durability remaining. Even with using Telekinesis used to slow down my momentum, that much damage was still taken. It would have been dangerous if I collided with a firm obstacle at that speed.

A deep crack has spreads through the middle of my blade, and the parts that had been melted by heat have become black. I'm partially destroyed without a doubt. If a common sword became like this, disposal would be imminent.

[When a bit of time passes, I'll recover.]

"Nn....."

[Hey, hey, what's with that face?]

"My fault."

[That's not the case. It's the result of my foolishness. I should have controlled myself a bit more.]

It was more difficult to control magic beyond the usual limit than I thought. To be frank, it was difficult to adjust the amount of magic power I made use of.

However, through this event I think I've found the true value of the Sorcery Skill. So far, I've been looking at it as a substitute for a high rank Magic Perception Skill that can increase the power of Magic by raising the degree of magic power imbued.

However, it's more than that. Because it allows me to understand the flow of magic, I can imbue magic power beyond natural limits, and because I can understand the flow of magic, I can just barely control it. An overboost of magic is possible, so to speak. Doing so is a double-edged sword, however.

[Well, it's fine so long as you're safe.]

"Thank you."

The deep impression of a teacher and pupil reuniting. That was the atmosphere that

should have been given off... If no one else was around, that is.

“H-Hey... Did that sword move on its own? Moreover, it seemed to have shouted several times..... It used magic as well, and-”

I forgot about Amanda—! Well, I was prepared for this to some extent, but I completely forgot about her halfway through!

I got too impatient and shouted through Telepathy... Even though it usually only reaches who I intend it to... At the time, it was transmitted in all directions. Naturally, Amanda would have heard my voice.

I even used magic to fly via Telekinesis, so...

“Nn...”

“Ah, wait. It’s alright. You don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to. I’m sorry.”

“?”

“It’s just, I asked you unconsciously. So, only tell me if you really want to. Everyone has their own circumstances.”

Even if you say that, you definitely heard me speak, right? What’s the point in hiding it? There is none, right?

(Teacher?)

[Fran, do you want to tell Amanda?]

(Nn...)

You’ve taken to her quite a bit, huh. Well, I had felt that was the case after the mock battle, but... Well, if Fran wants to tell her, I won’t object.

“Amanda.”

“Ye—s?”

“It’s like this ——”

– 3 Minutes Later –

Amanda is unreasonably excited.

“When you’re talking about Intelligent Weapons, they’re the weapons that make their own decisions, the things that’re mentioned in fairy-tales, right? *Kyaa!* They really exist!”

She’s surprised after seeing one for the first time. Intelligent Weapons are rare, as expected.

However, it seems that part of the reason for her high spirits stems from the fact that she was confided in with such a deep secret.

“Thank you for telling me, Fran! And... Teacher?”

[*Ou.*]

“Amazing... You really can speak~”

[Well, please treat me well from now on.]

“Yes. Same here! I’ll take the secret of you two to the grave! Also, consult me about anything you have trouble with, alright? I’ll help Fran’s friends anytime.”

“Nn.”

“I have the Title Guardian of Children, feel free to rely on me as well, alright?”

“Thank you.”

“A —h, so cu—te! If it’s for Fran, I’ll do anything!”

Well, it’s good that we confided in her. I didn’t really want to do something so boorish, but I made use of Law of Lies as well. All of Amanda’s words are true. In other words, Amanda really would do anything for Fran.

[How nice, Fran.]

“Nn.”

“*Ahh*, but I really want Fran to know that flustered feeling Teacher was giving off before striking the spider~! I was surprised to hear[Fran, don’t be reckless!]coming from a sword, you know?”

“Teacher: flustered?”

[*O-Ou*. I’m ashamed.]

“Because Wolfie^[1] jumped without warning, I couldn’t provide cover fire with magic, too. It’d get caught up in it if I did... I was quite flustered, myself~!”

“*Owuu...*”

I’m 100% no-good! In a haste-ridden panic I made error after error! There should have been way more methods to choose from! I should have requested Amanda for help or used Urushi’s Shadow Movement from the beginning...!

Haa... Not just Fran, I have a lot to learn too...

CHAPTER 54

URUSHI AND FRAN

“This dog is?”

[Dog...?]

“*Wuu...*”

As expected, it must be pitiful to be seen as a mere dog.

[It’s something I summoned.]

“I was surprised when it came out all of a sudden~”

[Fran, this is Urushi. It’s a Darkness Wolf that, as I said, arrived via my summons.]

“Urushi?”

“*Kuun*”

“Good boy.”

When Fran strokes its head, Urushi raises a joyful voice.

“There, there.”

“*Whuu*”

... This guy *is* a Wolf, right? It’s acting just like a big dog would...

“Nn.”

“*Hah, hah, hah*”

“Cute.”

As the nape of its neck, its muzzle, and its chin are rubbed Urushi closes its eyes out of pleasure and licks Fran’s face. Hey, hey, didn’t you eat a giant Spider just a little while

ago? You should probably wipe up your face, Fran...

Well, that aside, Fran's safe so how should we proceed? I guess first we should meet up with the rest of the Adventurers. I was a bit impatient so I didn't worry about it before, but this Dungeon was dangerous for Clad and Frion, right? If they ended up dying I'd have trouble sleeping at night.

"Hey, you guys, get up."

"*Uu..... Nnh...*"

"Huh...? Where...?"

"In a panic, you guys triggered a Transition Trap and got caught up in its effects."

"Ah, right, the lil' kid was too!"

"'S she a'right?"

It seems that after becoming unable to fight after being transferred, these two passed out due to poisoning and bleeding. However, while in a light-headed state, they caught glimpses of Fran defending them.

"Y'saved us."

"Thank you."

Oh-ho. The fact that they bowed their heads is worthy of praise considering they're Clad's companions. If they had acted haughty towards their benefactor I would have punished them a bit.

"*Ohn*"

"*Uwo!* What's that?!"

"W-W-W-Wolf! It's a Demonic Beast!"

They didn't react very well, huh. They're finding it hard to even stand up — or should I say that they've been completely paralyzed from shock? They're just sitting on their backsides looking up at Urushi with desperate expressions.

"A-A-Amanda! Please, save us!"

"Oou?"

"Hii! Its tongue! Its tongue is-!"

"Urushi, no."

"KUUuuu..."

When Amanda explains that Urushi is Fran's companion the two manage to settle down.

"T' make such an 'ighly ranked Demonic Beast yer companion...!"

"S' th' first time I've seen a Demonic Beast Weapon!"

After saying so, their eyes became full of respect towards Fran once again. They're completely captivated by Fran. It seems like they'll begin calling her 'Big Sis' any moment now.

"Ah, anyways, what'll we do now?"

"Yeah, where're th' others?"

"They went looking for you guys."

How should we go about finding everyone else...?

"Urushi: look for Humans?"

"Oon!"

With that, Urushi laid down and stared at Fran.

"Ride?"

"On, Oon!"

"Nn. Thank you."

“Oh my, it’s quite intelligent, isn’t it?”

Urushi’s back is still high up even when it lays down, so Fran simply climbs up.

“Soft...”

“*Aun!*”

Fran holds onto the back of Urushi’s neck, and I fix her in place using Telekinesis. Like this, she won’t be shaken off.

But what should we do about Adventurer A and B? They won’t be able to keep up with us on foot, but it’s dangerous if we leave them here. Should we ask Amanda to escort them?

“Urushi: carry?”

“*Onn*”

Urushi gently looks up at Fran and gives her a short nod.

“Like dogs?”

“Huh? Tha’s kinda abrupt, lil’ lady... Dogs... Well, I guess I like dogs, but–”

“Alright.”

“Eh? *Uoo–!*”

Urushi lifts the nape of Adventurer A’s leather armor with its mouth, just like how a parent cat would carry its kittens.

[Are you alright with giving them a lift?]

(*Wafuun!*)

Well, alright, but don’t pick up Fran like that.

“Then, I’ll carry you.”

“Eh? Amanda will?”

“That’s right, so behave yourself alright?”

“Uwaa!”

Amanda picked up Adventurer B and placed him under her arm despite him clearly being larger than her. What an odd sight to behold.

“Then, let’s go.”

“Hwoooooon!”

With that, Urushi starts running. By the way, I’ve been sheathed and am assuming my usual position on Fran’s back. I’ve sealed up the crack on my blade for the time being, but I should wait until we leave the dungeon for a complete recovery. Until then, I’ll just have to patiently settle with emergency repairs.

“Urushi: amazing. Running through the sky.”

[That’s thanks to Aerial Jump Lv8.]

Unlike Aerial Jump Lv1 that we possess with effects similar to multistage jumping, Lv8 allows Urushi to perfectly run through the air. It seems that it’s quite a pleasant experience for Fran.

“Spiders ahead.”

5 Trick Spiders can be seen heading towards us.

“Go.”

“Hhwoon!”

Oi, oi, Urushi, even if you don't plan on slowing down there's no reason to speed up, right? Even the pitiful screams of the Adventurers are being ignored.

"Huhoon!"

Called upon by Urushi's roar, jet black spears rain down on the spiders. Furthermore, the spiders on the left and right were torn to pieces and scattered about just as Urushi entered the next passageway. Most likely, it was Urushi's doing when its forepaws moved at lightning speed.

[—Flare • Blast!]

—"Fire • Arrow"

—"Wind • Cutter!"

In the nest-covered passageway, magic is fired in rapid succession to create a way through. Although the strength of the nests themselves are considerable, they're unable to endure the continuous barrage. Like that, we run through the cave without stopping while eliminating any spiders along the way.

"There's no response."

"Hii... Hii..."

"Ha... Hah..."

Amanda mutters so with a composed expression, while the two Adventurers look like they're barely holding onto their lives.

After running for a while, we arrive in front of an especially large passage. Inside was a large amount of spiders. Because of the numerous nests set up in the vicinity it's hard to see, but seriously, the number of spiders here is amazing. However, the presence of Humans can also be felt. Most likely, these presences belong to Cruz and the others. How is it that they managed to break through to this point? Perhaps there's an alternate entrance?

Well, either way, we won't be stopped by something of this level. Firing magic in rapid succession, we break through the passage and arrive at some sort of great hall. It's about double the size of the room we fought Army Beetles in at the Goblin Nest.

Spiders jostled around in such a room. Not only on the floor, nests had been set up all over the ceiling and walls, amounting to more than 50 total. Inside that spider-filled hall was Cruz, as well as the others. Isn't it unreasonably dangerous to challenge this room with their fighting potential? Testament to that, they were cornered against a wall. Some of them had Status abnormalities.

"Damn it, e'en if I cut an' slice 'em...!"

"If the path of retreat wasn't blocked off...!"

It seems that they went too far in and got trapped.

At the center of the spiders was a remarkably large spider. Poisonous-looking purple hair is grown over its entire body, arousing a feeling of discomfort.

Race : Trickster Spider : Demonic Bug : Demonic Beast Lv13

HP : 196 MP : 110 STR : 71 END : 89 AGI : 103 INT : 61 MGC : 45

DEX : 108

Skills:

Keen Hearing : Lv5, Playback : Lv3, Leap : Lv1, Poison Spray : Lv3, Lasso : Lv4, Trap Remodeling : Lv7, Trap Perception : Lv6, Trap Creation : Lv6, Confusion Poison Generation, Confusion Fang, Shell Enhancement, Infrared Sight, Enhanced Molting, Paralysis Poison Generation, Paralysis Fang, Deadly Poison Generation, Deadly Poison Fang

Description:

A Highbreed of the Trick Spider species, this demonic beast makes use of traps while hunting. Its ability to modify traps with the Trap Remodeling Skill in Dungeons is particularly troublesome, with turning simple Poison Spray Traps into fatal ones, or redesigning Transition Traps to lead to their own nests being notable examples. Its physical abilities are low, making it weak in close combat. Threat Level C.

Magic Stone Location: Head

So it was present in the Dungeon after all. A Trickster Spider. Its Status far surpasses the other spiders, too.

It's the boss of the spiders that caused Fran to have a terrible experience!

[Alright, let's take our revenge!]

"Nn."

"OOoon!"

CHAPTER 55

DO TRICKSTERS FEEL FEAR?

Just as I raised a shout in front of the hoard of spiders, I heard a pitiable scream.

“Uwaa! H-Help!”

“Leader!”

“Big bro^[1]!”

Adventurer A was already released, and B rushed forward in a panic.

Hmm. It appears that Clad’s been wound up with thread, rendered to a state that he’d probably be dragged into the cobwebs. Rather than being Poisoned, he’s been Paralyzed. He’s in quite a pinch.

[Shall we help? Urushi, to the Adventurers.]

“Onn”

“Nn. —Fire • Arrow!”

Magic is cast to burns down the spider’s cobwebs, but...

“Achichichi! Hot!”

The flames streamed down the thread, coiling around Clad himself as well. His hair might get a bit singed, but he won’t die.

“A00ooooooooon!”

With that Urushi unleashed jet black arrows, defeating the spiders surrounding the Adventurers. I don’t know if the spiders are intelligent enough to consciously feel fear,

but after witnessing Urushi's strength they edged back.

Well, the reactions of the Adventurers was more terrible, though.

"Uwaaa!"

"W-What the hell is this guy?!"

"Hii! This magic power is...!"

"A-an Onyx Wolf?"

"Idiot! This is way stronger!"

"I di'n hear anythin' 'bout this!"

"Damn it...! Everyone calm down!"

They had just been struggling against Rank E Demonic Beasts, so it's understandable that they'd fall into a panic when something of a higher rank appeared in front of them.

"No, wait! Amanda's over there!"

"An' on its back, ain't that the lil' lady?!"

"Ehh?"

They seem to have noticed somehow or another. With this, we won't have to worry about Cruz jumping out and attacking. Alright, as for our arch-nemesis the Trickster Spider—

"Bleed out and die!"

****DoGASHK****

"This is the consequence of doing such a terrible thing to Fran!"

Amanda's whip was breaking the Trickster Spider into pieces. Its Magic Stone was being shattered, too.

Well, of course it'd be an instant kill. Trickster Spiders are only Threat Level C due to how troublesome they are with the Trap Remodeling Skill, right? In terms of status, they're closer to Threat Level D. Still, to be finished off so easily...

[*Eh* — Ms. Amanda...?]

"Eh?"

I sent Telepathy to Amanda unintentionally.

"*Ah!*"

Turning in place, Amanda's has an expression of 'I really did it now!' plastered on her face.

I had told her about my ability to absorb Magic Stones only a short while ago. In fact, didn't she promise to give us the Trickster Spider's Magic Stone? Wasn't it something like an unspoken agreement? No, maybe it was foolish to believe her carefree 'I'll hand it over~'?

In that case, I, who didn't make her promise properly, am in the wrong...

"W-Well, now we can take out the rest of the spiders!"

She's trying to gloss it over!

"Right, Fran!"

... It can't be helped. We should give priority to exterminating the other spiders for now.

"Nn, let's do it."

“Grruuuu!”

[In that case, let’s make them feel the true meaning of despair!]

As a barrage of Fire Magic is immediately released, the frenzied dance of Magic began.

Amanda’s Wind Magic cut down the spiders on the ceiling together with their nests, Urushi’s Dark Magic skewered the spiders to the walls, and our Fire Magic burnt down the spiders over wide areas. Even Frion participated, binding the spiders in place by wrapping ivy coils around their bodies.

The best part, however, was when Amanda used Storm Magic on the ceiling, finishing off all the spiders all at once. Perhaps this is Amanda being serious? The magic didn’t affect the Adventurers at all... It was perfectly under control.

“As expected of Amanda.”

“Oh —? I was praised by Fran!”

Her bashful figure in response to being praised doesn’t seem strong at all, though.

Once we finished, what was left of the spiders was littered across the floor. Although they’re quite tattered, there should be usable materials here and there. Magic Stones should also be scattered about.

[Urushi, look for Magic Stones.]

“Auf”

At the very least I have to secure a Magic Stone from a Trick Spider, so I asked Urushi to reserve a couple of them for me. Urushi, who has a good nose, found them one after another.

Moreover, it’s stowing away them inside of the shadows. It’s an application of Shadow Lurk, most likely. How convenient.

“You two, um, er... That wolf...”

Cruz and the others approach cautiously. They made it out alive, but it seems that some of them are in pain. The Poison in their bodies must have started taking effect.

[Fran.]

“Nn. —Antidote! Anti • Paralyze!”

“Ooh...! We’re saved!”

Frion sat down on the spot, probably out of relief. There was even a guy who started crying. Well, it’s good that no one ended up dying.

“So, this fellow... Is it possibly an Onyx Wolf?”

“Different. Darkness Wolf.”

“Ehh?”

“This is the first one I’ve seen!”

“Seriously...?”

So noisy. Well, it’s a rare Demonic Beast that even Amanda hadn’t seen before, but...

“Miss Fran?”

“Nn.”

“I’ve never seen such a strong Summon before... Rather, Isn’t it a bit strange that you’re only Rank D if you can summon this?”

Frion’s eyes shine while he watches Urushi, seemingly losing his inner battle against his curiosity. Perhaps he’s a researcher-type?

Anyways, doesn’t it stick out a bit too much? We’ll attract too much attention when we get back to town... And whether it could even stay in an inn is questionable.

Truth be told, I've tried to un-summon Urushi, but it doesn't look like it's possible. It seems that it's the type of summon that simply remains summoned.

Also on that note, with normal Summoning, magic is consumed so long as the Summon is around. In this case, however, magic was only consumed during the Summoning process. I'm quite thankful for that.

[Urushi. Using Shadow Lurk, can you hide in Fran's shadow?]

(*Ohn*)

After responding via Telepathy, Urushi sinks into Fran's shadow. *Ohh*, it was instantaneous. Furthermore, there's no sign of it at all. Because I have the Sorcery Skill I can just barely identify its presence, but it would be extremely difficult for lower-ranked Adventurers to notice.

[When in town, can you possibly remain inside her shadow?]

"*Kuu.....*"

[No good?]

"*Onn*"

[It's just that you'd stick out a bit too much in town. It's possible that you'll be attacked on sight, you know?]

"*Ouu...*"

Urushi's ears lay flat with a **petan**, making what seems to be a sad expression. *Muu...* Even if you make a face like that, it's not like you were forced into her shadow.

(Teacher, a plea from me as well.)

[No, but that's...]

(No good?)

(*Ohnon?*)

How sly! Having four round eyes directed at me is no fair! To the people in the surroundings, this is only a strange scene of a man and beast staring at one another, though.

“Oon!”

[What? Did you detect something?]

“Aooooon”

Ohh? With its howl, Urushi began shrinking! Within seconds it became the size of a common large-sized dog.

[Is this perhaps the Shapeshift Skill? I had thought that it was a Skill that allowed its user to change its form to another Demonic Beast...]

“On, oon”

“Kya —a! It became so small! It’s so cute! Ahh, I want one too!”

No no, it’s small if you compare its size from a minute ago, but it’s still plenty large... Well, if it’s like this, maybe it’s tolerable for town?

[Haa... It can’t be helped. Can you retain this form when we’re in town?]

“Onn!”

(Thank you Teacher. With this I can mofumofu^[2] Urushi all the time.)

Fran, was that your reason for pleading with me...? Well, I want to mofumofu Urushi as well, you know!

A-Anyways, there’s no helping it. I’m the one who summoned it, so I have to take care of it properly. When the time comes, should we take it out on walks? On that note, I guess there’s no real need for a leash? Hm... It’s really turned into the feeling of having a pet dog, huh.

“Best regards mofumo– Urushi.”

“Oon?”

CHAPTER 56

THE CORE ROOM

After exterminating the spiders our party made its way to the Dungeon Core room.

“That over there is the Magic Ore.”

“*Hooh*. So this is Magic Ore in its purest form? It’s quite amazing.”

“Ain’t this th’ same as a pile a’ treasure?!”

Clad’s eyes shine as he rushes towards the Magic Ore.

“*Pu-*”

“Don’t you laugh, damn it! Jus’ who d’you think is at fault fer this!”

“Your life-saver.”

“*Gu-*”

“The cost of life.”

“I-I know already!”

Clad’s hair had been burnt from Fran’s Fire Magic, so it was shaved off. However, because it was a bit hard to cut it all using a dagger, several places remained unshaven. It’s amusing to look at, no matter how many times I see it. The fact that we could have solved his hair issue using Greater • Heal is a secret.

“*Pfhuhu...*”

“Shit...”

Every time Amanda and Fran looked towards him, they fought a losing battle against their withheld laughter.

“Yeah, yeah. Now then, Ms. Amanda: please collect the Magic Ore.”

“Ok.”

“Everyone who has an Item Bag, please do so as well.”

“Nn.”

Anyways, there sure is a lot of it. The Core room is completely filled with high-purity Magic Ore ingots. If I’m not mistaken, Magic Ore is quite precious, and is useful when making weapons.

“I’m sure you’re all aware, but information regarding this place is confidential. Upon speaking about it the Pledge will immediately be broken, thus notifying not only the Guild, but the Country as well. That being the case, please be careful.”

“We had no problem entering because we had permission, in the case an outsider enters the vicinity a Barrier would immediately detect them.”

“Fran should be careful too, ok? Otherwise the Guild Master will become noisy.”

“Why go so far?”

“Well, there’s a lot of Magic Ore here, right?”

“Yes?”

“That’s exactly why. Characteristics between Dungeons Cores vary, most notably regarding the amount of magic power needed to produce certain items. In this Dungeon, Magic Ore with high purity can be created with very little magic power.”

I see, so that’s why it isn’t open to the public.

After all the Magic Ore was packed away, Cruz took a look at the Core’s settings. If its state is as normal, only Trap Spiders should be listed as spawns.

“How is it, Cruz? Are all the Trick Spiders exterminated?”

“It’s reported back more than one species.”

Although their numbers were significantly reduced, the Trick Spiders weren’t fully subjugated. In this case, if we leave them alone they’ll just start breeding again. It’s also possible that another Trickster Spider is out there. If we leave things as they are,

not only will the difficulty of the Dungeon be raised, but the recovery of Magic Ore will become considerably harder as well.

There is, however, a good point to leaving the situation as it is.

In comparison to Trap Spiders, the materials from Trick Spiders are more useful, and thus more expensive. If they're recovered on a regular basis, it wouldn't be bad by any means. Furthermore, the Trick Spiders provide more magic power to the Core. As a result, the production of Magic Ore would also be influenced positively.

"Well, in cases like this ain't it better t' leave th' decision t' th' Guild?"

"That's indeed the case. On top of that, we'll have to report the finding of Human Bones."

As it happens, we ended up finding what seemed to be brand-new bones within the hall we exterminated the hoard of spiders in. Moreover, there were enough for almost 10 people. Judging by their condition, we arrived at the conclusion that the individuals had died one or two months ago.

And yet, according to Cruz, reports of deaths in this Dungeon hadn't occurred for several years.

So, just where did all of those bones come from? A Barrier that perceives intruders made by an A Rank Adventurer with the nickname 'Barrier Salesman' is in effect at the Dungeon's entrance, so it should have been difficult for anyone to get in without permission, and yet... Well, it's quite the mystery.

"Then, for now let's return."



In regards to the journey back, there weren't any particular problems. Fran was defeated in a mock battle against Amanda again.

Urushi joined in as well, but both of them were beaten up. That being said, their cooperation improved considerably thanks to that battle; even Amanda was surprised.

Urushi's fighting style has a high level of versatility. First is in regards to its Magic. With the ability to use both Dark Magic and Poison Magic, it can play an active role through both frontal attacks, and attacks from unusual angles.

Second, with its Fang Techniques its direct attacks aren't something to scoff at. In particular, its use of Shadow Movement is terrific. It's the kind of surprise attack that a Fiend would use, but in Urushi's case, it's actually more efficient. It can attack using Dark Magic without exposing its body by hiding inside of shadows, and its ability to transition in and out of Fran's shadow at unexpected times could be seen as downright dirty. The distance it can transition in is a bit short, but that's not much of a problem in combat.

If the Demon from a while back could utilize magic in this way, we would have had no choice but to run away.

Anyways, as thanks for the training, we were taught a bit about about<Christening>. As a result, it was discovered that the reason for Urushi's evolution was undoubtedly Christening. Still, Fran had given me a name, so why was it that nothing happened?

Through Amanda's explanation, I figured that out as well.

Christening is essentially the act of a higher-ranked individual giving a name to a subordinate or retainer. However, not only a name is gained. Through Christening, something akin to a contract is formed, strengthening the connection between both parties' souls.

The receiver of the name has their potential released, resulting in a raise in Status among a variety of other benefits.

In the case of Fran and I, she wasn't regarded as a higher ranked individual. So, while

I gained a name, the act of receiving it wasn't exactly the same as taking part in the Christening ritual.

In Urushi's case, its potential was let loose and it evolved. Furthermore, it fully received the excess magic power that was running rampant in its body. In the case that I put off Christening... It most likely would have gone out of control, only to be subdued by Amanda. I'm very sorry, Urushi. You were in quite the pinch.

Anyways, the information I wanted to know most — the reason why Demonic Beasts of the Wolf type appeared in Summon Kin — remains unknown. I managed to infer a little, but there's just not enough information.

I'd like to research that alongside more detailed information on Magic in the library but... Well... Places where one has to sit still for long periods of time are Fran's weak point.

I suppose when it comes to fishing she'd be able to manage, though. Most things seem possible at the mention of all-you-can-eat curry.

Mhh. On the note of food, the size of the servings she's been eating have been increasing lately. She'll be dashing straight into the Gluttonous Character archetype if I leave it alone... I should definitely reduce the amount I'm serving her.

Ahh~, but I become so weak when she stares at me with those eyes. With Urushi in the picture, that stare's power has been amplified by two~

CHAPTER 57

RETURNING TO ARESSA

◇ The day after we set out to return ◇

We've finally returned to the town of Aressa... But there's a bit of a commotion at the front gate.

[What's all the fuss about?]

"Lots of people."

Certainly, a large number of Humans have gathered. I think I've seen them somewhere before, but... Where?

"Knights, huh. What's goin' on?"

Cruz's words jogged my memory. Their armor looks just like the set that Auguste was wearing. In fact, the man leading the group had armor even more luxuriously decorated than his.

"Small fry knights."

"My my, that's well said."

"Hey, wait a minute both of you... Please make sure not to say such things in front of the Knights! The only strong thing about them is their pride!"

"I know, I know."

"Nn."

I understood as well. To be frank, the public's impressions of the Chivalric Orders was low, but it wasn't to the level that they would openly antagonize towards them. Why was it that the Knights themselves picked quarrels despite that fact, I wonder?

[Well, for now... Urushi, make sure to stay quiet, alright?]

“Onn”

It’s already in its miniature form, but Urushi’s still attracting a decent amount attention. It’d be troublesome if the Knights quibbled with us because of this fact.

“Well, it’s fine, isn’t it? The leader seems to be Urs.”

That reminds me, the Guild Master had said that their leader was a respectable man.

“Ohh, is that you, Ms. Amanda?”

“Yeah. It’s been a while.”

“Indeed it has! Having you here is quite reassuring!”

He’s quite the lively old man, isn’t he? He’s shorter than Donna, but their expressions are largely the same. — He could be described solely with the words ‘Dandy Macho^[1]’.

Name: Urs • Bendoro Age: 52

Race: Human

Job: Shield Knight

State: Normal

Status: Level: 50

HP: 527 MP: 223 STR: 218 END: 274 AGI: 132 INT: 103 MGC: 119 DEX: 122

Skills:

Coercion: Lv3, Pugilist Arts: Lv4, Hardening: Lv4, Danger Perception: Lv2, Horsemanship: Lv4, Leadership: Lv6, Shield Techniques: Lv8, Shield Arts: Lv8, Abnormal Status Resistance: Lv4, Spear Techniques: Lv3, Spear Arts: Lv6, Provocation: Lv7, Poison Resistance: Lv7, Magic Perception: Lv2, Vigor Manipulation, END ↑, Fortitude

Titles:

Baron, Leader of Aressa's Knights, Defender

Equipment:

High-Quality Mithril Spear, High-Quality Adamantite Kite Shield, Sturdy Silver Full-Body Armor, Red Lion Mantle, Bracelet of Mental Abnormality Resistance

He seems to be a bit stronger than Donna. However, while Donna is an attack-type Heavy-Warrior, Urs is a defense-type Heavy-Knight.

“Has something happened?”

“Yeah. There was a reaction to the Barrier. It seems that there’s a Demonic Beast of Threat Level C nearby.”

“So you’re heading out to subjugate it?”

“That’s right. First, we have to place restrictions to the outside of the town, then we’ll investigate the surroundings with a fine-toothed comb. We’ve issued a request for support from the Guild, too.”

Hmm. He really is an upright man, isn’t he? He’s something like a stereotypical Knight.

“There’re a lot of young Knights...”

“Ah, they’ve joined the order for various reasons. A purge was performed, you see. Once the problematic people disappeared, the motivation from the youngsters increased.”

The ‘problematic people’ stemmed from Auguste, no doubt about it. Once he and his followers disappeared, more proper Knights must have taken their place.

Anyways, a Demonic Beast of Threat Level C, huh? It couldn’t be–

Immediately, the eyes of the Adventurers who participated in the Dungeon investigation turned to Urushi, who sat itself down beside Fran.

“Urushi.”

“On”

“*Muoo!* T-That is... A Demonic Beast? Even if it’s small, what a dreadful amount of magic power...!”

“Most likely, the Demonic Beast you guys detected was none other than Urushi.”

“..... Is it Ms. Amanda’s familiar?”

“Nope. This is Fran’s pet.”

“I see. This young lady...? Hm. Is she perhaps the girl who wields a Magic Sword from the rumors?”

It seems that the name of the before-mentioned Magic Sword wielding girl hasn’t spread.

“Well, if it’s familiar then it’s fine, but... Can you distinguish it somehow?”

“Understood. Next time, wrap with a scarf before passing through. Have to issue a Familiar license later?”

“Got it. How about I just ask you a couple of questions for now, and I’ll write down your answers on the official documentation?”

“Thoughtful.”

“Then first, you’re positive this is a Darkness Wolf, correct?”

“Nn.”

After taking out a small piece of parchment, Urs starts writing. It seems that an official certificate is absolutely necessary to have a familiar.

“A—nd... What’s its name?”

“Urushi.”

“Urushi. And you? What’s your name?”

“Fran.”

“Next, what’s its gender?”

“...? One moment.”

Hm? That reminds me, I didn't check that either. It didn't think about that at all.

"Hyuuin!"

Kya ー, Fran, how bold! She just walked behind Urushi, lifted up its tail, and confirmed whether or not anything was there! P-Perhaps it's simply because she's a child...? To Urushi, this whole ordeal must be a disaster.

"Male."

"Kuuuuun....."

"O-Oh. Is that so."



After tying a red scarf around Urushi's neck, we were granted entry into Aressa. In accordance to the Familiar contract, we also received a crest to show that he was tame. It seems it's meant to be put on a collar or a similar item.

When we arrived at the Adventurer's Guild, there was a small uproar.

"..... Seriously, this time it's a C ranked familiar? It's not like you were a popular topic already or anything."

Right after opening his mouth, the Guild master threw that sarcasm at us. Still, it can't really be helped. When any meddlesome Adventurers got in our way to the Guild Master's office, Urushi returned to its true size and bit their heads. Of course, he didn't kill them or anything; it was just simple play-biting. They *were* left half-dead and covered in blood because of it, though.

"And on top of being a Darkness Wolf, it's a Unique individual? Even though it's already a rare race..."

What? Unique individual? There's no way I overlooked something like that. Isn't Urushi just a regular Darkness Wolf?

"Unique individual? Urushi is?"

"Oh, you didn't notice? Normal Darkness Wolves have completely jet-black fur, but this fellow has red mixed in at the edges. Because it's tucked into the scarf, it's a bit hard to see. In addition to that, it has a Unique Skill. A regular Darkness Wolf wouldn't have something like that. Even if it was only Level 1, having one means it's a Unique individual."

Seriously? I didn't know about that at all... I had never seen other Darkness Wolves, so I thought Urushi was the norm.

"Well, setting that aside... For accomplishing my request, thank you. With Amanda vouching for your strength as well as the addition of your familiar, people won't be making light of you anymore. Amanda's recognition in particular will spread through Merchants and Adventurers like wildfire, so when you arrive at Urmu't it'll probably be a common rumor."

"Nn."

"Please make sure to take your Guild Card to the reception desk later. It'll be stamped to grant you entrance to Urmu't's Dungeons."

Alright, alright! With this, we can do Dungeons.

"Nn. Then, leaving."

"Ahh, may I suggest confirming the status of your Job while you're there? A Job increase might be possible, after all. Usually it's 500 Gorudo, but I don't mind waiving the fee this time. Think of it as a farewell gift."

A farewell gift, huh... So stingy! We'll accept it, though.

"Thank you."

"When will you leave for Urmu't?"

“Soon.”

“I see. It’ll be a bit lonely.”

“..... You don’t mean it.”

“*Hahaha*. That’s not true. For better or for worse, you’ve impressed me. But, with this, my quiet daily life will return once more.”

“Nn. Take care.”

Seeing Fran lower her head with a **pekori**^[2], the Guild Master’s eyes went round. He seems pretty surprised. So Fran can do stuff like this too, huh?

****BAKAN****^[3]

“*Fuu*. I kept being surprised right to the end.”

CHAPTER 58

KLIMT – SIDE STORY

Knock* Knock*

“Enter.”

“Uncle, I’ve prepared the report.”

“Ah, Frion. You came at a good time.”

It was my nephew, Frion, who entered my office. Recently since there were many people who rudely entered my room without waiting for an answer, they seem to have forgotten that I’m the guild master. In this aspect, Frion is courteous. Taking a lesson from that, I would like to protest against the various unclear rumors.

“Please, sit.”

“Thank you very much.”

“Thank you for your hard work. There seem to have been various irregularities this time around, but...”

“There were many times that I almost died.”

The appearance of the Trickster Spider and the mysterious pile of human bones, is it? These problems were giving me a headache. Still, the discovery of the human bones was quite lucky.

“Uncle, about those bones...”

“Yes. I believe that some of them were the remains of Auguste Alsund.”

Actually, one of Auguste’s subordinates had confessed about a certain ploy. That is, the smuggling of Magic Ore using Transfer Stones.

Transfer Stones are magic tools composed of a pair of stones. When stone A is used, the holder is transported to stone B. However, because they can only be used once on top of being very expensive, they usually aren't amassed in large quantities.

Auguste's plan consisted of placing one such Transfer Stone inside of the Dungeon, as to return later without being sensed by the barrier and steal Magic Ore.

If I'm not mistaken, this plan would have commenced three months ago, when he declared his interest of inspecting the Dungeon and went in by force. Of course, I didn't lend him any Adventurers for something he was doing of his own convenience, so with their forces alone, it would have been impossible to fully traverse the Dungeon.

Sure enough, they were unable to get past the third floor, forcing them to turn back. As it turned out, however, they had used that occasion to set up a Transfer Ore in secret. I had conducted a personal investigation later, but nothing had caught my attention at the time. Most likely, it was because they prepared an expensive Transfer Ore with a concealment function. Up until there, the plan was going smoothly. Later, I'll have to seriously reevaluate the security system.

Anyways, it was after that point that irregularities began to occur. The Trap Spiders evolved into Trick Spiders after preying on one another, and Auguste, who turned back at the third floor, had no idea.

Well, we didn't know either though. As a result, the intruders were wiped out when they transferred in.

However, they also brought in new Transfer Stones after going in, as to allow multiple intrusions.

Through doing so, several intruders were sent in... But no one returned. This was natural, given the fact that they were transferred right into a spider den.

As a result, a trick spider who had eaten the magic tools, such as the transfer stones possessed by those who were sent in, made an even further evolution. That's my

theory for why the Trickster Spider made its appearance in the dungeon.

If I knew that was going on inside the Dungeon, I wouldn't have sent in low-ranked Adventurers. I'll need to give them a generous bonus.

"I'll be giving you a bonus for the danger you were subject to as well."

"Please do."

"That aside, your report, please."

"Yes."

The reason I had called for Frion was because of the request I had given to him personally.

"Then, according to you, how was she?"

He joined the dungeon investigation request to observe the rank D adventurer Fran, and to that I mean to ascertain who she is.

He is not only an Adventurer, but a member of the Guild's staff as well. Rather than a Spy, he would be more like a hidden examiner.

"One moment please. —Tarua."

[Hmm. It's been a while, Klimt.]

"You're as splendid as ever."

We Elves are a race that loved by Spirits, and among us there are people who are born possessed by a Spirit. It'd be about every 1 in 10 people, I suppose?

The Spirits that possess such Elves are known as Guardian Spirits, and are capable of receiving training. Furthermore, unlike Contracted Spirits, Guardian Spirits require significantly less magic power to summon; you could say they're a buddy-like existence.

Many Guardian Spirits have affinities that the Elves are naturally gifted, so Nature, Soil, and Water spirits are numerous. Frion's Spirit on the other hand is special.

It's of the Soul attribute. Among Spirits, such an attribute is rare. I've made a contract with a single Soul Spirit, but its abilities don't come close to Frion's Tarua.

There were times when the Spirit perceived Fran as wicked, but half the time it was wrong. That was the capability of my Soul Spirit. Tarua on the other hand is much stronger, making it more suitable.

[Through my judgement, I could not see a wicked heart on the young girl called Fran. In fact, it has been a while since I saw someone with such little malice towards others.]

"For example, how she acted towards the Adventurer called Clad?"

[Fumu. That case was somewhat curious.]

"Curious how?"

[Umu. When the one known as Clad caused a commotion, the others reacted with anger and irritation... But that wasn't the case for that girl. On the contrary, whenever Clad caused trouble, she found it rather interesting.]

Clad's Roar of the Dragon was a promising young party. Their pace for growing was fast, considering they were able to reach Rank D within only a couple of years. Well, if you excluded Fran, that is.

Their problem, however, lied with their attitudes. They cause trouble, and they've made a lot of enemies as well. Even with that, however, I could promote them to Rank D without a problem.

Therefore, they were considered for this time's request.

Using them, I could watch how Fran reacted towards people with bad character. At the same time, by having Clad interact with someone of a higher Status, I planned on having Clad become aware of his own hubris, but...

The effect was a bit more drastic than anticipated. Because they lacked sufficient strength, I intended to decline their promotion from the start, but when they were notified of such they accepted it with slightly-disappointed faces and a deep nod. I could understand why they reacted so after hearing about the Commission through Frion.

Nowadays, the Adventurers are preaching of Fran's splendor.

"Tarua, thank you very much."

[Umu]

"Return • Tarua"

"Then, Frion. What kind of impression do you have of Fran?"

"Let me think... She's an amazing child, I suppose?"

[Is it not the same?]

[Yes. But, it isn't only her strength. How should I say it, I felt like her actions were considered beforehand. Shall I say that it is the conclusion I reached after I had a conversation with the person herself? Rather than concerning a plot, I think that she just thinks about things more deeply. To be that composed at that age, it's to the extent that I want to learn from her.]

[Hohou. That will serve as a reference.]

[If you say so, it's worthwhile to persist. But, why are you fixated on that girl to this extent?]

[Do I seem to be that fixated?]

[Yes. To the degree that rumours of you having a Lolita complex is spreading.]

[Silence!]

It was a waste to think he was courteous. Let me tell you, I don't have a Lolita complex, you know?

The reason I was fixated with Fran in particular..... One is because we lack information. As a guild master, I have to pay attention to troublemakers who are always in the center of turmoil. Despite this, there is surprisingly little information on

her. Since she was approved by me as a guild member, this is like one of my duties.

It was never a Lolita complex. However, everyone has me as a Lolita complex, Lolita complex. Oops, my thought deviated a bit. Not good, Not good.

[Speaking of what I know, she has a magic sword, and is said to have appraisal.]

[I know of the magic sword, but appraisal?]

[Yes. It is certain.]

It was a magic stone that I handed over as an advance payment for this request, and I was convinced when I saw her selection. She chose a rank C magic stone of only two among the 20 stones, other than that, she also chose the magic stone that came from a demonic beast that inhabited the sea. It is too much to be a coincidence.

She not only possesses Appraisal, but also Appraisal Concealment. This is surprisingly advantageous in battle. That alone deserves precaution.

[Another thing, one of her weapon skills reached an advanced level. Judging from her combat style, it appears to be the art of a master swordsman. In addition, her magic is flame, storm, and darkness, and she learned lightning and healing afterward. Furthermore, her MGC is more than 100.]

A while ago, Fran changed jobs and returned. Her chosen occupation is a Magic Warrior which is the advance level of a Magic Swordsman. It's status growth is better than a Magic Swordsman and it has the inherent skill [Magic Convergence]. The condition to choose this job is to have one or more of the sword, ax, or spear system combat arts to reach the advance level, in addition to using two systems of advance magic, it means that the MGC is more than 100.

And also, in the column of possible occupation choices, there seem to be Darkness Art User, Storm Art User, Lightning Art User, and Healing Art User.

In this short period, I wonder how much her skill will grow. She is in her first half of

her teens. It is half-hearted to call her the term genius. There is possibility of her holding several blessings of god. Honestly, I can't help but feel fear.

And then, the second reason that I'm fixated on her.

While her real nature is unclear, she is growing at a terrifying rate. It is impossible not to be alarmed.

[Well, I thought it even when she chose the magic stone, her naive side was unexpected.]

Certainly, I didn't think that she would really change occupations. If you go to the temple, you can change your occupation without leaking any information even if it is rather expensive. Isn't she concerned that the information about her ability growth and skills would be leaked to us? Or, did she not think to this extent?

[Also, Amanda likes that one.]

If I indirectly bring up the subject of Fran, I thought that she would start talking about accompany Fran on this request..... I was surprised that I got even more than I plan to. Perhaps, she might have noticed my expectations. She was that concerned about Fran.

[Does Ms. Amanda have the ability to judge a person that much?]

[Rather than that, she could see through children. For example, though a child is seen, but if he or she is a long lived species who merely grows slowly, she normally comes into contact with them. Is her title usage the reason for that, I wonder?]

In other words, Fran is truly 12 years old. Until today, there was a small doubt of her being disguised as a long lived beastman.

[Honorable Uncle, I don't understand. I wonder what kind of person she is?" (pengu: just a genius girl with a magic sword that has another world memories)

[I don't understand either. No, it is probably who is she not?]

[What do you mean?]

[We were convinced that she was concealing something. But, is such a thing really true?"

Naturally, since she works as an adventurer at that age, I'm sure that she has some kind of circumstances. Just like many other adventurers. However, the kind of schemes and conspiracies we were anxious about didn't exist. That is the final conclusion we came to from the gathered information.

She has diverse skills and a magic sword, a little belligerent and easily involved in trouble, accompanied by a unique darkness wolf, thought to have a special background, and is in some way a 12 year old girl.

It is neither more nor less than that. Could it be that the figure of Fran we saw is not everything? No, when I list it again, I am likely to fall into paranoia again. Not good, not good.

[Don't depend on the judgement of the spirits too much, you might lose the eyes to judge people.]

It may be that Nell, who got along well with her in a blink of an eye, has a very discerning eye.

CHAPTER 59

NIGHT OF RETURN

“Then, kanpai ! ”

“Kanpai”

“Kanpai!”

The night after we finished the dungeon exploration.

Fran is at the bar. Amanda and Nell are also here. Having heard that Fran was leaving Alessa, they decided to throw a farewell party.

“Aah! Fran-chan is leaving me! Farewells are so sad!”

“Me too! Do you really have to go!?”

“Nn. Going to dungeon”

“Is the dungeon more important than me!”

“Right! It’s just a dungeon! Didn’t you only just meet Amanda, while we have been friends for nearly a month, right?”

“Mou! It’s not about length! I’ve been making friends with Fran-chan on a sleepover!”

They keep talking, about how Clad and The Roar of the Dragon failed the exam, how Donna was dumped by a woman, all the while drinking more and more.

The two gradually got drunk and the skinship increased. Urushi eventually retreated to Fran’s shadow after being stroked too much.

“I am also concerned about Fran-chan～”

“The orphanage?”

“Ara? Fran-chan knew? But it’ll be all right. There is no problem if I leave taking care of the children to the director, right?Isn’t it better if I go out and earn a lot of money

for the orphanage? So, I'll go Dungeon Diving with Fran!"

"Nn. I don't mind"

"E? Really? Yahoo!"

"That's no good!"

"Eeh? Why, Nell?"

"You, did you forget the contract?"

"Ah, that one. Ngh, I've signed a troublesome one!"

"You're bad with the Guild Master's sweet words, right"

"Uuuuh..."

"Contract?"

"That's right! I can't leave Alessa"

"Why?"

"Ehm, you see..."

"Hey, Amanda! There are too many people here!"

"Ah, right. ——Silence!"

Amanda set up a barrier to block sound. It's a good magic for telling secrets, but maybe because she's drunk her control was not too good.

Not just our own table was affected, but several of the surrounding tables got affected as well. Suddenly the sound disappeared and I could see a customer with a look of confusion on his face.

"Didn't we enter a dungeon? That's pretty important over there. After all, it's a place where we can mass produce magic ore. It's a place where it can be supplied steadier than with a mine, right?"

That is true. Looking at it from a military standpoint, it would be quite important. It may be natural to hide the existence using Oath Magic.

"But, the dungeon is under the jurisdiction of the guild, right? Even for a country it's not something they can just obtain. But, the country wants the dungeon in Alessa no

matter what!"

"Nn"

"And, Alessa is quite close to the border of the Raidos Kingdom, right?"

"Is that so?"

"Yes. Our relationship with Raidos is quite bad. That country is expanding pretty aggressively. At worst, there is the possibility of Alessa being targeted"

"It's impossible to keep the magic ore a secret forever. Some day it'll be known"

"And the country has been trying to obtain jurisdiction of the dungeon on the basis of this fact!"

"However, I do not want Alessa's guild to lose this jurisdiction to the country! Because there is nothing else around Alessa than that dungeon, so if that dungeon is taken Alessa's income will sharply decline, right?"

"And, our salaries would be cut too!!"

"So, the guild needs to guarantee that there is enough strength to protect Alessa even if we're attacked by a neighboring country. By making Rank A adventurers be residents"

So for that reason Amanda cannot leave Alessa, huh?

"Because the country is eyeing us, the knight order here is kept weak. Commander Urs is a graduate of Alessa so he refused to leave though. The knights used to be a lot more serious in the past!"

It was not just because of bribes, but also for reasons such as Auguste becoming Vice-Commander, and perhaps there was also an element of harassment.

"And so, that's why I can't leave this town~"

"I see"

"Even though I wanted to take care of Fran-chan—!"

"I said, it's impossible!!"

"Well then, I'll cherish today at least!"

"Yay. Truly Amanda!"

“Ara, not you, Nell. Only Fran-chan～”

“Stingy—!”

“Good stuff! Fran-chan～! Don’t forget me even though you’re leaving!!”

“Nn! Won’t forget”

Well, she was beaten up many times. Of course she won’t forget that.

“What!? Fran, you’re leaving Alessa!?”

“Wh-What did you say!?”

Somehow, it seems like the surrounding adventurers had been listening in. It seems the effects of Silence had ended without me noticing.

It’s a dwarf. Sitting there with a huge ale mug it certainly matches the atmosphere of a dwarf.

Who is he? I feel like I’ve seen him somewhere but.... Ah! He was one of the rank D adventurers who came after we had first fought the goblin army! I think his name was Hellbent.

“Hey, you serious!?”

“Shit, and we wanted to let her enter our party”

“What! We were going to invite her!”

“Fran-chaaan!!”

“Hey, don’t try to steal a march, guys!”

Heyhey, where did all these guys come from!? Somehow, it seems like everyone at the surrounding tables were adventurers. Besides that, even more adventurers have gathered!

“Fran-chan, I’m glad to have gotten to know you!”

“Damn it! I haven’t repaid the favor yet, ya know～!”

Frion and Clad are there too. It seems they too have been drinking here.

“Where are you going?”

“Ulmur”

“Oh! A dungeon huh!”

“Nice! Some day we want to go too!”

“Wait a second! You should rank up first!”

“Yoosh! A cheers to the young lady’s prospects!”

“Uooohh!!”

“Cheers!!”

“Kanpai!!”

“Kampai!!”

“Bring more booze!”

“Bring a whole barrel!”

“Gahahahaha!!”

“Drink! Drink!”

“Another! Another!”

It’s a real Don Chan fuss. They even want Fran to drink!

“Are ye drinking, Fran-chan?”

“Nn”

“This’s not juice! It’s something better～”

“Hey, Amanda! What the hell are you making her drink!”

“It’s... It’s just wheat juice!”

“I’ll drink”

“No!”

“Eee～! Stingy! Just a bit!”

“Stingy”

“No means NO! I’ll be taking that!”

“Ooooh! Nell is downing it fast!”

“That’s hot!”

“This is fun, Fran-chan ~!”

“Nn”

Well, Fran looks like she’s having fun so I guess it’s OK.

In the end everyone drank until they collapsed. Fran and I ended up coming home in the middle of the night. It seems Urushi was sleeping in Fran’s shadow most of the time.

[Are you OK?]

“Nn”

While I couldn’t drink myself I did enjoy the atmosphere. Maybe I got a little drunk from that alone. It seems poison resistance does not fully negate alcohol.

“I’m OK”

[Is that so?]

“Nn”

[Are you hungry now?]

If she’s hungry I’ll just pull something out.

“Bit hungry. Curry?”

[This time it’s not curry. Just a moment! Yosh, the date has changed!]

This inn has clocks in all the rooms. In fact, it seems it’s a fairly cheap magic tool so it’s common.

Most places has a clock on the wall to show the time. However, I have never seen a wristwatch so maybe it's hard to downsize it.

And, there are calendars. Each month is 30 days but there is a special day every three months. It's written as a Party Day. It seems like the four seasons are officially separated by this day.

So, one year ends up with 364 days. By the way, today is March 18.

[Well then, try this]

"? What's this? Smells sweet..."

[It's a pancake. Actually, I wanted to make a decorated cake but I was lacking in materials and time. So, I settled for this]

"Why? Any celebration?"

[Yupp! Today it had been one month since we first met. How could I not make something?]

It was actually quite hard. I had to be creative to not be noticed. Doppelganger is still lvl 1 so it can only be used 5 minutes a day.

Even if you greatly lower the status of your alter ego and kept pouring magical power excessively with the Sorcery skill, the maximum limit of activity was 15 minutes.

I could only send my Doppel out secretly while Fran was sleeping. But since we had already gotten permission to use the kitchen outside of working hours it'd have been a waste not to use it, right?

I secretly snuck in the material during our shopping and then advanced the preparations for 15 minutes every night; making cream from the milk, cutting fruit for decorations, it was hard work.

I finished the first prototype a few days before we went to the dungeon. I studied how to bake with only 15 minutes to work with every night; it was a fierce challenge!

In addition to that, because my Doppel was so weak the level of Cooking actually sunk to 1!! It was a real challenge to make decent dishes like that!

I tasted it once but due to the quality of my Doppel its sense of taste was really dull. In addition, it seems to use magical power to digest things

eaten in reverse, it is a vicious cycle that the activation limit becomes shorter as you taste it!

Also, when people saw me during the work I could not explain what I was doing, also due to the quality of my Doppel.

Well, because things didn't work out I ended up cooking while carrying my main body. The more you're used to a skill, the more you tend to rely on the sensation of it.
//Maaka: Like Small-Fry Vice Commander did

"This cake, for me?"

[Ou!]

It looks like Fran hadn't noticed anything, Surprise Successful!!

[Please go ahead!]

"Nn. I'll eat"

On top of the two-tiered pancake, I had put plenty of fresh cream, syrup and fruit. Fran cut the pancake with a fork and started eating.

"Mogyu Mogyu..."

[How is it?]

“Tasty. Super Tasty”

“Mogyu Mogyu Mogyu Mogyu...”

Good! it seems like she liked it. Fran is eating energetically in silence.

[Hey, your mouth is all sticky]

“Nn”

[Yosh, that’s better]

“Thanks”

“Mogyu Mogyu...”

[Oi, you got sticky again!]

“Because the cake is good”

[Yes yes～]

Fran goes silent again. She wouldn’t say another word and just kept eating the pancake.

“Thanks for the food”

[It was nothing]

“Ne, Teacher?”

[Hmm?]

“Thank you”

[Ou!]

That smile is more than enough of a reward.

CHAPTER 60

VERIFICATION

“Oh, have you come today too? Magic-Sword Girl” (Shuuren)

“Nn” (Fran)

Stop it with that name, Shuuren-jisan!

We were in the Guild’s library to learn more about some things Amanda taught us during the dungeon visit.

Fran has no problem focusing on most things but when studying her concentration doesn’t last long.

So, we’re checking carefully while keeping it quick.

The last few days have consisted of sparring with Amanda in the mornings, taking a nap after lunch and then studying in the afternoon. It has been rather relaxing.

“Today I want to study magic” (Fran)

“Even if you say that, there are many different kinds” (Shuuren)

“Then, compound magic” (Fran)

“Hou. Then, on the shelf there, on the third row from the bottom, on the right end there are beginners books about composite magic” (Shuuren)

As always, he has an amazing memory.

The books recommended by Shuuren-jisan contains a brief introduction to various compound magics which is easy to understand.

I read while asking Fran to turn the pages for me. Fran does so with a bored expression. After that, I studied various other spells but as for rare attributes there wasn't very much written.

And so, let's summarize what I've learned in these past few days;

- Wood Magic: Composite of Water and Earth. As its name suggests, it can control plants. It can not only grow plants, but also make them die. There also seems to be a spell for not getting lost at sea.

- Ice Magic: Composite of Water and Air. It can manipulate cold air. It can attack with ice and snow, and it can also freeze objects by removing heat in the area. There are also spells for Cold Resistance.

- Life Magic: Composite of Water and Fire. It is Magic which manipulates life itself. It does have recovery spells but that's not its true value. It's able to nurture life, and can even create artificial lifeforms (homunculi) when combined with alchemy!

- Lightning Magic: Composite of Wind and Fire. It can not only control electrical forces but also magnetic fields. Apart from attacking it can also be used to enhance the body's nervous system, increasing reaction speed.

- Sand Magic: Composite of Wind and Earth. Apart from manipulating sand, it can also be used for drying, dehydration, weathering, etc. It seems like it can be used for processing food this way.

- Lava Magic: Composite of Earth and Fire. It manipulates metals, ores, lava, etc. It's an attribute with a strong connection to the deep earth. It seems to have spells useful for blacksmithing.

That's how compound magic works. There are also the special attributes.

- Spatial-Temporary Magic: It's Magic that can manipulate time and space. Metastasis,

time manipulation, and summoning are confirmed to be of this attribute.

- Moonlight Magic: Deals with reflection and mental manipulation, even physical manipulation. In my opinion, it really reminded me of vampires and werewolves.
- Auxiliary Magic : Attributes specialized for assisting status ups, barriers, etc. There is a technique that is similar to other attributes, but effects like auxiliary attributes can not be obtained it seems.

Another thing I was interested in was old man Gallus's skills, so I checked out his other skills in detail.

- Blacksmith: A system gathering magic that is necessary for smithing. It is something created by the God of Blacksmithing. It includes various spells dealing with fire, wind, molten iron, and so on, but it seems that it can only be used for smithing because its power is drastically reduced when its used in battle.
- Magic Blacksmith: Allows the creating of magic equipment by putting mana into things created with Blacksmithing. It provides magic control far beyond common blacksmiths, allowing the user to give the desired effects and attributes.

Even though their names are similar they are completely different.

There are many other things I would like to look into, but we decided to leave the library room. I lost to the sound of Fran's stomach grumbling so we went to eat lunch.

Oh well, it can't be helped. If we eat lunch we can go and verify some skills later. Fran is tired of the study room anyways.

After we left the town we had Urushi confirm that there are no people nearby. Now, let's verify the skills!

First, let's confirm the skills I got from the spiders. Unfortunately I was not able to

absorb the Trickster Spider's magic stone, and we had to be careful with absorbing other stones too since we were not alone, but I managed to absorb 10 magic stones from Trap and Trick spiders.

Confusion Poison Generation: Lv 1

Infrared Vision: Lv 1

Poison Jet: Lv 1

Paralytic Poison Generation: Lv 1

Strong Poison Production: Lv 1

Poison Generation skills gave you the ability to create poison in your body. It can give poison attributes to your blood and body fluids. This poison has no effect on the creator so Fran is unaffected when using it.

Infrared vision is, well, as its name suggests.

Poison Jet is the ability to spray poison. It's a meaningless skill if you don't have a poison generation skill, but regardless of that I can already inject Demonic Poison. It seems like our repertoire is getting quite dirty...

I also want to check the Attribute Sword.

[First is the Flame Attribute](Teacher)

"Nn" (Fran)

I also used it against the spider web, but it's quite powerful.

[Is it hot?](Teacher)

"It's alright" (Fran)

"Ou" (Fran)

Fran answers with a calm face while swinging my red-hot flaming body. It doesn't seem like she's enduring so it should be fine.

However, Urushi looks like he finds it too hot. It seems like the user is less affected by the heat.

There might be a problem when using the Overboost of the Sorcery skill though. Let's try it carefully with a little power.

[How is it?](Teacher)

"Hot" (Fran)

"Kyaun" (Fran)

Un, it seems like it's impossible to swing me in this state. It seems like it can only be used with the Telekinetic Catapult. Too bad.

[Well, shall we try the other attributes as well? We'll try all basic attributes first](Teacher)

Earth and Water attributes are subtle. Of course the attack power increases, but both seem to simply increase the impact power. It seems like it'd be useful with blunt weapons.

However, the effect of Wind attribute is good. It increases my sharpness tremendously. Although the effect doesn't affect as large an area as the Fire attribute, if it's pure attack power the Wind Attribute wins hands down.

[How about the Dark Attribute? Is it possible to use Attribute Sword with it in the first place?](Teacher)

"Try?" (Fran)

Oh! It's a sword of darkness! Cool——!! However, I don't understand the effect well. It

definitely increases the sharpness.

[Urushi, do you understand?](Teacher)

“Oon” (Urushi)

Urushi understands Dark magic better than me. I thought he might have a hint.

[Ah! Urushi!](Teacher)

“Gyan!” (Urushi)

Urushi who was sniffing the blade let out a scream. Hey, what are you doing?

If you check the status, his MP is decreasing. It seems like it has a Mana Burn effect. Moreover, it just requires physical contact.

“Kuu” (Urushi)

“Alright?” (Fran)

“Uun...” (Urushi)

I learned the effect through Urushi’s sacrifice. Yosh, let’s continue to the next one.

“Next, Lightning” (Fran)

[Yosh, Let’s do it!](Teacher)

My blade is crackling with electricity. Fran tried the cutting ability.

It’s pretty useful. If we keep it weak it acts as a stun gun. If we make it strong it will fry the opponent from the inside. Moreover, it’s difficult to defend against since weapons and armor would just conduct the electricity. It should be quite effective in battle.

“Lightning sword. Cool” (Fran)

[Does Fran like this?](Teacher)

“Nn. Biri-biri, amazing” (Fran)

“Oon!” (Urushi)

Fran is swinging around my crackling body. Next to her, Urushi's fur is standing straight, he looks like a hedgehog. Looks kinda gross. It seems both are having fun though.

Next up are the special attributes. First we tried Recovery and Auxiliary, but the Attribute Sword wouldn't even activate. It seems only the basic, compound and light/dark attributes could be used with Attribute Sword.

[Next is Fran's new inherent skill](Teacher)

“Nn. Magical Convergence” (Fran)

It is a skill she got when changing her class to Magic Warrior, so I don't have access to it. Therefore I can't give her advice on it. First, let's have Fran use it.

Magical Convergence: Increase the power of magic and fighting techniques by manipulating and converging magical power instead of increasing the amount of magical power used.

According to the description I got through the Sorcery Skill it seems to be a skill which breaks the user's limits.

[Be careful](Teacher)

“Nn” (Fran)

First Fran cast an ordinary Fire Arrow. Five ordinary fire arrows appear. I'm very familiar with this spell so it's just right for comparison.

And then, the Magical Convergence version.

“—Fire • Arrow” (Fran)

Bobow!!

[Whoa! Ain’t that amazing](Teacher)

The arrows are twice their normal size and there’s almost twice as many as well. It seems the power of each one is quite high.

[Can you do it more precisely?](Teacher)

“Will try” (Fran)

After experimenting we found out that the Magical Convergence can be used quite liberally. Its effect is consumed by a single spell but increases its power several time over. It seems to be useable about 20 times.

It seems the magical power consumption when using Magical Convergence does increase to about three times normal. Well, as long as I’m here we won’t have to worry about that though.

More importantly, it’s better than being unreasonable by using my special skill. Since I couldn’t control the Sorcery skill even if I forced it. It’s power is simply too high so it would hurt Fran.

Fran’s Magical Convergence may not have the output of the Sorcery skill, but it can be controlled perfectly. It truly is worthy as a unique skill of a high-ranked job.

Well then, we still have some skills to verify left.

“What next?” (Fran)

[That’s right. Well then, how about trying that?](Teacher)

“That?” (Fran)

“Oun?” (Urushi)

[Skill Superiorization](Teacher)

“Oo” (Urushi)

For the sake of today’s request, we have secured some magic stones from Goblins. Of course, they have Sword Arts.

[I’ve been thinking about how we should use the Self-Evolution points. I think we should do some experiments with Superiorization](Teacher)

I’d like to know if Superiorization is useful. If it’s not worth the points we’ll ignore it in the future.

“Nn, agree” (Fran)

[Then, let’s do it?](Teacher)

“Nn” (Fran)

My remaining Self-Evolution points are 41. We’ll use 10 to superiorize Sword Arts.

< Sword Arts: LvMax will be superiorized >

A few seconds after the announcement ended I start shining brightly. Something amazing is coming!

< Superiorization is completed. Sword Arts: LvMax has changed to Sword Arts: SP >

The name is quite subtle; it just changed the notation to SP. Well then, what kind of skill is it?

Sword Arts: SP – Special skill: The Sword Arts skill growth rate of equipment

registrants greatly increased. All status of equipment registrant +2. The effect of Sword Arts skill rises.

It was expected that the effect of the Sword Arts skill would rise. However, the status and growth rate increase is a terrific ability. Rather than empowering me, the superiorization improves the growth and strength of my equipment registrants!

Since the growth rate of Sword Arts greatly increases it means that Fran will be able to one day stand at the peak of swordsmanship even without me.

[Fran, how's the feeling when swinging me?](Teacher)

"Same as usual" (Fran)

[How about Sword Techniques?](Teacher)

"Nn. Dragon • Fang" (Fran)

It looks like it's working properly. No problems with Sword Techniques either huh. With Fran activating a Sword Technique from a higher level than her Master Sword Arts level it means it properly counts as a higher level than the Sword Techniques. Well, it seems like I won't need to take over and raise her Sword Arts intentionally.

Superiorization. Not bad. However, it's hard to tell whether it's always better to do it. It's a matter of priority. Well, the Sword Arts I tried this time is a weapon skill, I do not know how magical skills will change. I would like to try it for a bit.

"Teacher, want to superiorize other skills too?" (Fran)

[Well. No, let's stop for now. Rather than that, I have something I'd like to talk with you about](Teacher)

"Consultation?" (Fran)

[Ah. After we went to dungeon, I have reflected on things](Teacher)

"Nn. Me too" (Fran)

[Until now, we've equally increased all useful skills; magic, weapon and other combat related ones right? But, I thought about whether to raise a different kind of skill](Teacher)

“I see” (Fran)

Unlike the wide outdoors, escape routes are quite limited in a dungeon. I’ve come to realize that to survive there you need more than just combat ability.

This is the candidates I’ve thought about for that.

Chant Shortening: Lv 1

Crisis Detection: Lv 1

Sign Perception: Lv 2

Instant Regeneration: Lv 1

Abnormal Status Resistance: Lv 3

Magical Barriers: Lv 1

Trap Sensing: Lv 1

With Crisis Detection, Sign Perception and Trap Sensing we can try to avoid traps and dangerous enemies in advance.

Chant Shortening will widen our range of viable tactics.

Instant Regeneration, Abnormal Status Resistance and Magical Barriers will allow us to survive in a pinch.

I have 31 Self-Evolution points left. I could max out one of the skills or distribute it to three different skills for diversity.

As for me, I’d like to increase the detection skills for a bit, especially the Trap Sensing. When you think about dungeons, it’s traps right?

[What do you want to do, Fran?](Teacher)

“Unnn～” (Fran)

After talking with Fran, we decided to raise the Sign Perception, Trap Sensing, Chant Shortening and Abnormal Status Resistance to Lv5.

Since we're not diving into a dungeon right at the moment, I felt we should probably save some points but... I decided to raise the levels right now. Are we a bit too loose with points?

If you can get the skills you want, don't you want to use them right away? So we decided to allocate the necessary skills right now.

With this we'll be much safer when exploring the dungeon. I only have 5 Self-Evolution points left though.

[With this we should be safe even in a dungeon](Teacher)

"Nn" (Fran)

"On" (Urushi)

[But, you won't regret it?](Teacher)

"Nope" (Fran)

"Owan!" (Urushi)

CHAPTER 61

GETTING NEW EQUIPMENT

“Equipment, ready?”

“Ou! It’s perfect!”

Four days after the farewell party we were at old man Gallus’s workshop.

We have been in this town for one month now. Today is the promised day.

[Has it gone well?]

“Gahahaha! It’s the best! It’s been the most enjoyable time of my life!”

[Isn’t that exaggerating it?]

We gave him C and D ranked monster materials. It’s certainly not weak but a blacksmith of Gallus’s level would definitely have worked with more advanced materials.

[Haven’t you created stronger equipment before?]

“Nono, I didn’t mean it is my best work ever”

“?”

“How to say it, it’s like I put my soul into it. That’s important! Well, I always put my soul into it. However, there are moments when I can do a particularly satisfying job”

Nope, I can’t really understand what you mean...

“This was one of those times. My skill, creativity, soul, and more. There are times when they come together amazingly well”

[Well, what can we expect then?]

“Ou! This is armor blessed by God!”

“God?”

Gallus went to the back of the store and brought back a huge bag. He then put the contents on the counter with a confident expression.

“Take a look, this is the young lady’s new armor!”

Name: Black Cat’s Armor

Defense : 100

Endurance : 600/600

Effect: Pleasant Sleep, Deodorant, Purification, Mental Stability Boost

Name: Black Cat’s Gloves

Defense : 70

Endurance : 600/600

Effect: Impact Resistance Boost, Arm Strength Boost

Name: Black Cat’s Light Shoes

Defense : 65

Endurance : 600/600

Effect: Jumping Boost, Agility ↑ Mid

Name: Black Cat’s Heavenly Earring

Defense : 15

Endurance : 300/300

Effect: Poison Resistance Boost, Noise Tolerance ↑ High, Attribute Resistance Boost

Name: Black Cat’s Mantle

Defense : 85

Endurance : 600/600

Effect: Cold Resistance, Heat Resistance, Equipment Self-Repair

Name: Black Cat's Leather Belt

Defense : 15

Endurance : 300/300

Effect: Magic Resistance ↑ Low, Abnormal Status Resistance ↑ Low, Item Box (small)

Yes, that is horrifyingly powerful. It's far stronger than our current equipment, which we paid 150 000 for. It's even superior to the expensive equipment we took from Gyuran.

By the way, the equipment we took from Gyuran is like this:

Name: Leather Armor of the Fire-fighting Lion

Defense : 90

Endurance : 500/500

Effect: Fire Resistance ↑ High, Poison Resistance ↑ Low

Name: Shoulder pads of the False Dragon

Defense : 61

Endurance : 400/400

Effect: Impact Resistance Boost, Arm Strength ↑ Low

Name: Hundred Eyes Shoes

Defense : 45

Endurance : 330/330

Effect: Paralysis Resistance ↑ Low, Agility ↑ Low

Name: Shield of the Kuroishi Tree

Defense : 68

Endurance : 900/900

Effect: Fainting Resistance Increase, Impact Resistance ↑ Low

Name: Protective Bracelet

Defense : 15

Endurance : 300/300

Effect: Magic Power Consumption Reduction, Physical Barrier

Name: Anti-poison Bracelet

Defense : 5

Endurance : 100/100

Effect: Poison Resistance ↑ Mid

The equipment made by old man Gallus has both excellent defensive power as well as effects. Moreover, it's also lighter than our current equipment? But, what does he mean with them being blessed by God?

"This is my masterpiece, the Black Cat series!"

"Good name"

[But, it sounds too cute for an old man]

"Onn"

"Leave me alone! Well, it wasn't I who named it as such"

"then, who named it?"

"It was God"

"?"

"Owan?"

[What do you mean?]

"What, you didn't know? This is a "Named Item""

It seems Named Items are special items given a name by a God. For example, if the God of Blacksmithing recognizes something made by a blacksmith then a name will be given to it by the God.

It seems legendary equipment found in labyrinths often are Named Items.

Divine protection will be granted only to the best created items, increasing their performance further.

“It is the highest honor a blacksmith can receive to have an item created by them be recognized by God. I thank you for giving me that opportunity. My acquaintance who helped with the production also cried from joy. Thank you!”

[No no, we’re the ones who should thank you for such amazing equipment]

“Gahahahaha! With the divine protection that equipment can compete with equipment created from Rank B monsters!”

[That’s amazing!]

“Moreover, the protection is amazing!”

[Eh? You mean it’s not the resistances that’s the protection?]

“Well, you’ll get it somehow when you equip it”

“Got it”

We borrow a room in the back where Fran can put on the Black Cat series. The equipment has a sense of unity with white fringing on a black background, which kind of resembles Fran.

The equipment has both a boyish atmosphere and cuteness living together. Clothes with a hole for the tail. A pleasing outerwear with a collared big shirt in bisuche style. The jeweled clasp at the chest also adds femininity. It shows off her navel but I’ll forgive it since it’s cute.



Open-fingered gloves and boot-like shoes which covers her calves. The leather belt has a cowboy-like shape and can conceal a dagger. It even has a small Item Box which can hold about five potions. The platinum-colored earring doesn't have much of a presence but it looks cute when Fran wears it.

The mantle reminds me more of a raincoat rather than a mantle. Still, it's light and supple, and it doesn't disturb movement.

"Mostly non-metallic materials have been used. It was a real struggle to make leather this strong. The composite materials used to make the equipment was created through immersing the Tyrant Saber's skin, the Doppel Snake's scales and the Blast Tortoise's shell in the Slime Lord which had been mixed with various reagents"

[Just hearing that is amazing]

"It was a series of failures before I was satisfied. Because it's made with a special material it's far stronger than common metal armor. Above all, it's light"

Lightness is important. Fran uses speed and agility as her main attributes, so this is perfect equipment for her. When I checked again, I noticed something.

[Black Cat's Protection?]

"You noticed? It's the effect of God's blessing. Black Cat's Protection is given while wearing the whole Black Cat Set. The effect is all status +10. In addition, it negates instant death effects. In exchange, it can only be used by the Black cat Tribe"

To get such protection from equipment, isn't that fantastic? All status +10 alone is amazing. While it might not be quite as hard as heavy plate armor, considering its lightness it is definitely far better than that. It has a huge amount of effects and is as hard as metal fitted armor.

"Very cool"

[Moreover, it's cute. Overpowered!]

"Right? It's the strongest equipment right. Gahaha!"

[Is it really all right for us to get this for free?]

“Yeah, that was the promise. Since I got all the extra material I still made a profit you know. Also, just being able to create that has been amazing, so I wouldn’t accept money even if you wanted. However——”

“However?”

“There is one thing I must tell you. This is equipment of the highest quality. However, due to that, it requires a rather powerful demonic magic stone to repair damage to it. Which would be quite expensive...”

[About how much would it cost?]

“About 100 000 the first time, then it’ll probably double each time”

[Geh! That’s pretty bad]

“Yes. However, the mantle has Equipment Self-Repair. That actually affects everything equipped so if you are not in a hurry you can just wait a few days for it to be restored”

That’s a relief. Then, maybe we won’t have to get it repaired ever. Phew, I rushed to conclusions.

[Then, next would be equipment for Urushi]

“Is that your dog?”

[Aa, it seems that we have gotten a familiar. Is there any armor that can be equipped by a wolf?]

There are other problems as well. Urushi changes in size often. We can’t afford it breaking everything he does. If it fits when he’s small, it’ll probably strangle him when he grows big.

When I told Gallus about it he said it won’t be a problem.

“There are many armors with automatic size adjustment functions. If you just get one with that it will be fine”

“Really?”

“On?”

“Ou! Leave it to me. I can make it in two days”

[In that case we'll rely on you]

"Ooon!"

[Then, how much would it be?]

"Let's see... If I get 50 000 I could make something quite good"

"Good, please do"

After that, Urushi ended up licking and hitting old man Gallus with his wagging tail as he tried to take measurements, and other such things happened.

Since old man Gallus is quite tough it was fine, but a normal blacksmith would have had his life endangered. Or rather, isn't this old man amazing? To take no damage from all that...

I guess I'll have to seriously train Urushi to behave or we'll have a serious incident some day.

"Where are you guys going next?"

"Ulmot"

"Hou. I've already done what I wanted to do in this town. Maybe I should head to Ulmut next?"

[Oh? Well, should we head there together then?]

If it's old man Gallus he's most welcome to join us.

"By the way, what route will you be taking?"

[From here we'll head south to DARTH and take a ship to Barbola. From there we'll head to Ulmut on land. It's more expensive than only heading by land, but it's also faster. More importantly, I want Fran to get to experience a journey by boat]

"Go together?"

"...I'm sorry, young lady. I don't think I can go with you"

"?"

[Why?]

“...Dwarves are mountain folk”

“Nn”

“In other words, we’re not good with deep water. I can’t swim!”

I see, because he’s a dwarf. Certainly, when I look at Gallus he’s built like a boulder. He definitely doesn’t seem like he’d float.

“I see. Too bad”

“Kuu”

“I’m Sorry”

[Well then, I hope to meet you again in Ulmot]

“Ou!”

CHAPTER 62

NEW WINGS

Three days after receiving the new equipment.

“See you～”

“I’ll be waiting!”

“Let’s meet in Ulmut!”

“We’ll be waiting for you!”

“See you～”

We were seen off from Alessa by Amanda, Donna, Gallus, Randall and Delt.

[It was a good town]

I do not know about any other towns in this world, but I’m glad this was the first place we visited.

“Nn”

[Well then, lets head west from here on. To the port town DARTH]

We’ll get on a ship in DARTH and head south from there to Barbola. After that we’ll travel by foot to Ulmut.

Since we sold all the materials we had we have plenty of money. So, my current goal is to take a good ship. Preferably a real passenger ship rather than a transport ship.

If it turns out to be too expensive I’m planning on earning a little in DARTH. We bought quite a bit of potions but we still have one million Gorudo. It’ll work out somehow.

[Well then, I'm counting on you, Urushi!]

"On!"

Urushi lowered himself and Fran jumped up on him.

[You've got a good grip?]

"Nn"

Fran is holding on to Urushi's collar firmly. The collar made by Gallus has a string specifically for making it easy to grab hold of. If she holds on it that, Fran will not be thrown off easily. Nice job, old man Gallus!

Urushi's forelegs are equipped with black and gold anklets. They slightly increase the strength and speed of the wearer and they also has a size adjustment effect so Urushi can wear them no matter what size he takes. These were also made by Gallus.

He's amazing to make these in just two days. As expected of a master blacksmith.

"Urushi, Go!"

"Ooooooh!"

Urushi barks with great spirit and runs west.

Fast Fast!! Alessa is quickly disappearing behind us!

[Keep it up, Urushi!]

"Onon!"

Urushi speeds up even more with my encouragement. His tail is swinging with excitement. But, it seems Fran doesn't share the excitement.

“Eyes, hurts”

It seems Urushi is too fast. Fran can't keep her eyes open due to the wind shear, so I use wind magic to reduce the pressure.

[How's this?]

“Nn, feels comfortable”

Good. It seems Fran can enjoy the scenery comfortably now by just narrowing her eyes a little.

“What's that?”

“Birds”

“That mountain, the top is white”

Fran is enjoying the ride. The scenery is flying past us. Also, Urushi never slows down at all. Even if there are obstacles he just flies over them with a jump and continues in a straight line.

[Oh, is that a magical beast?]

“Where?”

[Look, behind that tree]

“Let's go”

[Ooon]

Occasionally we spot magical beasts, and hunt them down. There doesn't seem to be any strong magical beasts around here, they all die from a single attack by Urushi. I absorb the magic stone, store the meat, and let Urushi eat the bones and organs. Un, it's best not to waste anything.

However, this high speed didn't last. No matter how much of a magical beast Urushi is,

he'll get tired if he keeps running. He'll also get hungry.

Sometimes he also uses Sky Step so his MP has also decreased a lot.

[It can't be helped. Let's go by foot for a little while]

"Good job"

[What'll we do with urushi?]

"On!"

Urushi barks lightly and then slips into Fran's shadow. Urushi has two skills for entering shadows; Shadow Dive and Shadow Migration. Shadow Dive can only enter a shadow, while Shadow Migration allows him to move from shadow to shadow.

Unlike Shadow Migration which consumes a lot of MP, Shadow Dive seems to consume almost no MP at all. Also, it seems to only consume MP when entering the shadow and nothing while remaining inside of it. Therefore, it seems like Urushi can rest and recover while inside a shadow as such.

If he's in Fran's shadow he'll also of course move along with Fran so it's a useful skill.

[Well, shall we continue leisurely?]

"Nn"

We keep on going while having lunch at the same time.

Around here the surroundings change. The forest surrounding Alessa ends and turns into plains. However, it's not a savannah like wilderness, but a green grassy plain.

Considering the change compared to around Alessa you understand it's actually quite far. It makes you understand just how fast Urushi was.

It's only been half a day since we left Alessa. When I casually looked up into the sky

my mind shouted out in surprise.

[Uoooh! That, that! What is THAT!?!]

“Nn?”

[Look, over there! Up there!]

“Which one?”

“On?”

[There, next to the clouds! The one floating in the sky!]

“That floating island?”

[Floating island? What’s that? FANTASY!!]

You know, it’s a flying island! A Flying Island!! Ghibli fans will drool. Well, even if you’re not that, no fantasy lover can resist that.

Just above us, an island is floating in the sky. I get excited just watching it!

how is it floating? Is it that? Flight Stones? Or is it wind magic? An even more fantasy-ish power? Nice~, I want to go~!

[Ne, nee, is that not something rare?]

Fran doesn’t seem very surprised. Maybe it’s a common sight in this world.

“Nn. Sometimes they float”

[Seriously!?!]

How terrible! It’s already been two months since I reincarnated into this world, yet I still didn’t know of such a wonderful spot!

No, wait a second. If it’s a common occurrence, that means you can visit them without problems right?

[I want to go up there!]

“Impossible”

[Eh? Is that so?]

“Very high”

It seems you need to use a certain magic item to get up that high, and the usage fee is tremendously high. Fran doesn't know exactly how much it costs but it seems impossible for ordinary people to go up there.

Is it like how private space travel was in my old world? but, I want to go!!

[Hey, isn't there any other way?]

“Seems to be some magicians who can fly up there themselves”

[I see]

In that case, wouldn't Urushi's Sky Step work? If you keep using it to jump ever higher...

[Urushi, how about it?]

“Kuuuu...”

It seems like it's impossible. Well, I guess he'd run out of MP from such continuous use.

Then, what if we use Floating? No, impossible. There is an altitude restriction for floating, and if you go above that it'll just slow your fall instead of maintaining the altitude.

[I wonder if I can get up there with Telekinesis]

“Teacher, cunning”

[Hm?]

“Me too”

[Want to go?]

“Of course”

“On!”

“Well, let’s not rush”

That being said, as a matter of fact... No, wait! I got a flash of inspiration!

[Well, let’s give this a try shall we?]

I use Telekinesis to hover in front of Fran with my side up.

[Now, get on!]

“Get on?”

[That’s right. There’s no way you’d know about surfing. Anyway, stand on top of me]

“Nn...”

Fran seemed a bit nervous about standing on me.

“All right”

[Ou! Also, it’d make it easier if you used Floating. I’ll be using wind magic to weaken the wind resistance]

“Got it”

[Urushi, enter Fran’s shadow for now]

“On!”

[Then, let’s go!]

I made use of Telekinesis and Floating and flew upwards. Acting as a surfing board, with Fran on me.

“Oooh. Flying”

Success!! I'll name it Telekinetic Air Ride!

Initially I moved horizontally. Fran seems to be OK with the movement. It seems to have been a good idea to fixate her feet with Telekinesis.

I turn right, turn left, go up and down while gradually increasing the speed. Good. It doesn't seem to be any problems.

[Well, let's go]

“Nn!”

[Oryaaa!!!]

I was flying in a spiral, going up smoothly. I don't rise vertically since that wouldn't be comfortable for Fran.

“Amazing. Teacher is amazing”

“On on!”

[Urya uryaaa~!!]

Telekinesis Full Power!! We're gradually approaching the floating island. The island which originally only looked like a tiny pebble has grown to the size of a fist.

Even though I've already reached a height where clouds are racing by, the island is still far away. It really is high up in the sky.

The bottom of the island is just plain rock. I really want to see what's on top of it.

[Fran...]

“Nn?”

[I'm sorry!]

I was becoming exhausted. It's no good, it seems it was impossible to fly into the sky while carrying Fran. It seems that continuous application of force is different from the explosive strength of the Telekinetic Catapult. I'm running out of magic power.

Perhaps, even with practice I could only fly for about 15 minutes?

If I become good at this it will be a new method of transportation, which seems to be useful for bypassing dangerous areas as well as escaping quickly.

"Too bad"

"Ouuu..."

[Shit!! Some day I will definitely get there! Just you wait!]

CHAPTER 63

NEEL VILLAGE

Two days after leaving Alessa...

We have arrived at Neel Village, halfway between Alessa and Darth. We made it in half a day even though it normally takes four days by horse. We got here so fast thanks to Urushi's fast legs and my ability to get through swamps and over cliffs with Telekinetic Air Ride.

If we get another familiar like Urushi we could travel really far in no time at all by riding them in tandem, don't you think? Thinking so, I tried another summoning, but...

It was no good. Why, why did the summoning list get all grayed out and unusable...

I could not find out much about that in the guild library, but I think my "Vessel" is simply insufficient.

Summoners refer to the upper limit for contracts as "Vessel", and the familiar's strength as "Capacity".

Vessel is as it sounds, while Capacity has a water-like image. A powerful familiar has a greater Capacity, and they can only be summoned as long as the summoner has the Vessel to support that Capacity. And, when the summoner's Vessel is filled up by the Capacity of the summoned familiars it is impossible to make further contracts.

Urushi is a unique individual of a Threat Level C monster. It's not really strange at all for his Capacity alone to fill up my Vessel.

[For the time being, we don't have a choice other than to keep burdening Urushi huh?]

"On!"

You don't need Telepathy to understand this. You're saying you're going to do your best, huh. I am happy to have such a praiseworthy pet.

[In the meantime, could you get smaller Urushi?]

"Ou..."

Well, despite that, I do not intend to pamper you.

“Gate is over there”

The village is surrounded with a wooden wall, it seems you have to enter through the gate.

When Fran presented her guild card to the guard at the gate he was quite surprised but we were able to enter without problem.

[It’s a tranquil village, ne]

Uncles with scythes giving of a farm-like aura, aunts doing laundry, it’s almost like a painting.

“Countryside”

“On”

[As you say]

We’ll be staying here for the night. The questions is whether there is even an inn here.

[By the way, is there an adventurer’s guild here you think?]

It might not even be 100 people living in this village. Would there really be a branch in such a small village?

As I thought so, there it was! Well, at least there is the sign hanging there. But no matter how you look at it, it’s just a normal house. Furthermore, it’s even smaller than the other houses.

“Hello”

“Oh, welcome?”

Even the inside is really a private house. It's like someone just smacked a counter at the entrance to some old house.

"Girl, this might seem like a café or a tool store, but it's actually a branch of the adventurer's guild ya'know?"

"Know"

"Haa? Ehm, well, what do you want?"

Well, it's not that we really want anything. We just saw the guild signboard and entered on a whim.

But, to be honest...

[Fran, let's sell the material]

We picked up the materials from the monsters we beat while going here. It's just from threat level G and F, but it will at least cover today's lodging.

"Want to sell this"

We took out the materials from the Storage, making the receptionist uncle's eyes open wide in surprise.

"Where did you get this?"

"Defeated"

"You did, girl?"

"Nn"

"Eh?"

Yupp, he has a doubting expression on his face. Maa, it can't be helped really.

[Fran, the guild card]

“This”

“Girl, you’re an adventurer? Eh? Rank D? Haha, ain’t this well done～”

Treating it as a fake huh? Seems like he thinks it is just a child’s mischief.

“Still, it’s really well made. Can’t tell the difference”

The uncle holds the card over the crystal functioning as a guild card authentication device. It seems like he’s going to check if it’s real or not. And, he gives off a startled shout.

“Hoho, it’s real? A real D rank adventurer?”

“Nn. Real”

“How surprising!”

From what he tells us, it seems like Alessa sends a few adventurers to Neel village on a half-year basis. He’s been stationed in this village for 3 months so he didn’t know about Fran.

However, he had heard that an amazing newcomer had appeared in Alessa from merchants travelling to DARTH.

“Say, it was a black cat beastman girl, who’s terrifyingly strong, and so beautiful it makes the guild master cry? The so called Magic Sword Girl. I’d heard that you were no weaker than C rank”

The first half is good; Strong and Cute. To make the guild master cry... Well, that rumor doesn’t harm Fran. The problem is the nickname! Even here it’s Magic Sword Girl! What the hell is up with that!?!?

[Fran, you’re being called Magic Sword Girl you know!]

I have ot correct it!!

“Magic Sword Girl?”

“Ou, that’s you right, Girlie”

[It’s widespread after all!]

If I do not correct it here, it will spread even further.

“Nn. Cool”

[Eh? No way?]

“I’m a Magic Sword Girl”

I’m apealing with a broken heart. Does she like it?

“I knew it”

[Fran! Wait a minute! Something like Magic Sword Girl? Is that OK to be called?]

“?? It’s good. Cute and cool”

[U, Urushi, what do you think?]

“On!”

Aaaa... He’s positive about it. Am I alone in this? What about the uncle there?

“How nice. I hope I’ll be able to pile up enough achievements to get a title some day～”

I have no comrades here!!

Are? Is my sensibility wierd? Is Magic Sword Girl a cool nickname? Seems like it’s seen as a good nickname...

Maa, if Fran likes it, it can’t be helped but...

“Oops, got lost in the story there. We don’t buy that here”

“Is not a branch?”

“Even if you call it a branch, it’s mainly here to contact Alessa”

Is that so? It certainly doesn’t look like there’s any money in a place like this. Probably, it’s just doing simple monster extermination and such.

“However, we do buy medicinal herbs and such. Since it’s used in the village. How about it? If you have any I’ll buy them”

Medicinal herbs huh? We collect stuff when we have the time, though a lot of it is poisonous grass. Even Urushi does search for it, but he too finds mostly poisonous grass. Is it because he is good at poison magic?

We don’t know its exact effect, but the seemingly dangerous poisonous grass has been piling up in the Storage.

“Poisonous grass?”

“Well, it depends. Some are used for pesticides or for producing anesthesia. Here’s a list of all different herb we’re buying”

There’s about 20 kinds listed, but we don’t have much of the ones on the list. The only one we have a reasonable amount of is Ghost Grass. I have no idea how to use it, but Urushi found a sizeable colony so we have a fair amount.

“Here”

“Oh, Ghost Grass. And it’s a lot!!”

Even this amount is just one third of what we have in Storage.

“Used for?”

“This? It works as a catalysy for Ghost Magic, and if you process it with alchemy you can make undead purifying potions”

Hohou, that's some good information. When we get to the next city, should we bring it to an alchemist? No, it would be interesting to try it out ourselves too right?

"Then, in total that'll be 7000 gorudo. Well, this guy can't be found easily around here so we'll be saving this"

Oh? is that so? We found a colony near the village quite easily...

"Actually, this area seems to have many areas where magical power has stagnated, and undead will spawn there. There are a lot more undead than normal monsters. Well, it's mostly Lesser Zombies and Lesser Skeletons, so it'd not that dangerous"

(Teacher, what to do?)

[Is it the place of the colony?]

(Nn. Tell?)

Un, it's fine to tell him. I don't want to monopolize it and I don't know if we'll come by this area anytime soon. There is no reason to keep it a secret.

"Found a colony nearby"

"Hee?"

"This child did"

"That's amazing. I've heard that some pharmacists train dogs to find medicinal herbs. Has that dog been trained to do so?"

"Have no done, but his nose is good"

"On!"

"hey, will you sell information about this colony? If we have such a place we can harvest it periodically"

"Intended to"

"I'm grateful!"

We decided to show him to the colony. At first, we were told to mark the location on a

map, but we really don't know the geography of the neighborhood at all. Actually, since I was carried around while we traveled I don't really remember much about the exact locations. We'll have to depend on Urushi's nose here.

Payment would depend on the size of the colony, but it would be at least 50000 gorudo.

"I'm a rank E adventurer, name's Argen. Nice to meet you!"

"Nn"

CHAPTER 64

COLONY

With Urushi's speed it takes 2 hours to the colony of Ghost Grass. Walking normally would take a day. We decided to move with Argen on a horse and Fran on Urushi.

Argen was quite surprised to see Urushi get big. Oh yeah, that's right. He thought Urushi was a dog, and he turned out to be a Darkness Wolf. I will praise him for not running away.

However, Argen's horse is terrified. It refused to get within 5 meters of Urushi while moving. It made Urushi a little depressed. Come on, you're a predator! Don't get down from a damn horse!!

"Urushi, good boy"

"Kuuu"

As Fran said that, we came back to a place I recognized. That rocky cliff, and that tree on the hill; we passed here yesterday as well. Over there's where the colony was.

"In that forest"

"Hou, well done finding it"

It's a small grove a bit away from the highway, which you'd normally not have any reason to enter when travelling. We could not have found it without Urushi's nose.

"Thanks to Urushi"

"On～on!"

Urushi sticks out his chest as if bragging.

"Hee～ As expected of a threat level C monster"

“Urushi is amazing”

“Oon”

Don’t look so embarrassed! Because Urushi is so smart he really does have a lot of facial expressions.

“Well then, shall we go?”

“Nn. Here”

It’s nothing complicated getting this far. Though the colonies are in the middle of the forest.

[Hey, shall we ask a little about how to use Ghost Grass?]

I’m interested in magical catalysts.

“Um?”

“What is it?”

“Ghost Grass, how to use?”

“There are various uses, but if used as is it has a combined effect of poison and paralysis. It’s pretty dangerous if you eat it without knowing anything. Though I don’t think anyone would ever eat it by mistake”

“Other uses?”

“By making it into a potion. You can make a potion that only damages the undead, and sprinkling that on the ground can keep undead away temporarily”

So it’s like Holy Water?

“Also, it can be used as a catalyst to increase the effect of Ghost Magic. I’m an amateur when it comes to knowledge about Ghost Magic though, so it’s just something I’ve heard”

Hmm, there are a set amount of known uses it seems. It seems interesting to try out some experiments with it.

While we were walking and being taught about Ghost Grass, right before we entered the forest, Argen suddenly stopped.

“Argen?”

“Hey, are they really further up here?”

“Growing up there”

“Iya, understood...”

What? Did he suddenly become afraid? But why? There are no sign of enemies.

“?? Going?”

“Iya, but...”

“Urushi”

“On!”

“Uwawawa! Don’t push me!”

“On! On!”

“Uwaa!”

Arget got pushed by Urushi’s nose, fell forward and rolled forward into the forest.

Ah... Isn’t that too excessive? Arget crashed headfirst into a tree.

“Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!”

“All right?”

“Ah, yeah”

“Then, let’s go”

“I, I got it!”

Oh? Didn’t he say he’d return home already? Making him forcibly enter the forest if he doesn’t want to is a bit harsh, you know.

However, this time it was Fran who stopped and tightened her expression. Well, I'm the only one who can see that change in expression though. I also know the reason why Fran stopped.

[Something's there]

"Nn. Probably a monster"

"Eh? There's a monster?"

Raising the level of Sign Perception was worth it. It seems Argen doesn't notice it. Well, his highest detection skill is Crisis Perception at lvl 3 so it can't be helped.

"Towards the colony"

"Is that so..."

I just feel a presense, so I don't know any details. However, if it was a really strong monster we'd be able to feel it's magical power all the way over here easily. It's not an opponent we cannot beat.

"Then, let's go carefully"

"Nn. Urushi"

"Oun!"

"So he can even do things like that huh"

Urushi gave out a quiet howl. Then, a thin layer of shadow covered Fran and Argen. It's a barrier that blocks of their life-signs. It covers the body like armor so you can move with it active. Furthermore, it even shrinks the body a little, a perfect covert mode.

"Going covertly"

"Ou"

"Got it"

We slowly approach the colony of Ghost Grass. When we're approaching the center of the forest we can detect the magical power of the enemy. It's a magical beast of about rank E.

Fran and Urushi won't have any problems, but it might be a hard foe to Argen.

"You should crouch a little"

"Ah, ok"

"Guruu"

We proceeded while protecting Argen. Light is filtering in from ahead of us, from the clearing where the Ghost Grass grew.

"...there"

[Human?]

When we looked into the colony from the shadow of the trees, something was there. It was squatting down in the field of red and black Ghost Grass and doing something. It seems like it's picking the grass.

However, I do not know if it's a human or not. It's wearing a big robe with a hood covering the head. Although it feels a bit too thin it is human-like in terms of physique.

[Let's take a moment to observe]

(Nn)

"It is slow, it's slow"

The moment when the robed person stood up, we saw it's face. And Argen suddenly gave out a shout.

"Wa!!"

"Who!?"

Damn! We were noticed!

[Shit! Let's go, Fran!]

"Nn!"

"Ouuuu!!"

Make fast decisions. Rough estimates are not good, you need to be decisive.

[Skeletons have their magic stone in the torso]

"Decide with a single blow"

So, the thing wasn't human. Peeking out from the hood is a white skull.

It's a skeleton. I don't know why a monster is picking Ghost Grass, but since we're noticed we'll take care of it quickly.

"Fu!"

Fran makes a great leap while drawing me, and Urushi runs along the ground like a black wind.

The skeleton starts to move but, too late! We'll make it no matter what!

But, the next action by the skeleton was completely unexpected.

The skeleton didn't pull out a weapon nor chant magic, nor even show any intention to dodge, it just held it's hands above it head.

"Hiyaaa!! Help!!"

[Wait a-! Fran! Urushi! Stop!]

CHAPTER 65

BERNARDO

In front of us the skeleton is cowering while trembling.

“Pl, please spare meee～”

“?”

Fran looks really confused.

“Aah! God of the Netherworld! Please, help me!”

“Um...”

“Hiii!! I’m not tasty! I have no money!”

Somehow, it seems like we are the villains here...

“Oioi, Fran-chan! What happened!?”

Argen had regained his composure and was approaching.

“? Beat a monster?”

“Noo! Don’t kill me!!”

“What the? Argen too is surprised at this guy”

“I was... I was just surprised because it was so sudden”

“Don’t beat?”

“This skeleton is someone’s creation, so don’t beat it”

“Creation?”

“It’s kindda like your Urushi. It was created by some Necromancer (Ghost Magic user) somewhere”

“Then, not enemy?”

“Well, if it serves some evil guy it could be an enemy, but just beating it suddenly without asking questions is a bit too much. In some cases that could be considered a crime”

Is that so? If we take down this subordinate, we could be making an enemy of the Necromancer.

I heard from Amanda that Ghost Magic is not considered evil in and of itself, and that the undead created by it are not particularly hated by adventurers either.

Undead that spawn naturally are considered pests, but those that serve a necromancer are treated like a pet or subordinate, much like Urushi who is allowed into towns despite being a magic beast.

“I, I am a good representative?”

Your appearance is completely that of an evil-looking undead though.

“however, this is the first time I’ve met a talking skeleton”

“Rare?”

“Pretty much so. I guess it was created by a pretty skilled necromancer”

“My master is a genius indeed”

“Oh, it seems you can not only talk but also have a fairly good thinking ability. It really must be an amazing necromancer”

“Bones, what you doing here?”

“Collecting catalyst”

“Ghost Grass is it?”

“Yes. But it seems someone has torn down a lot of it. It’s a shame”

It got torn down by someone? Is that about us? No, but if it grows in the wild you can’t complain if it’s harvested right? There is no sign here saying it’s someone’s field. That’s why we are not evil! Or is that not what you meant?

“Are you growing it here?”

“That’s right. Because of the dense magic power it is suitable for cultivation. I just provide fertilizer and water the field”

Aaa... It’s completely a cultivated field. It seems like there is no sign because there’s a barrier protecting it.

According to the skeleton you would normally have a feeling that you do not want to go here, which is a psychological effect caused by the barrier.

Right as we were about to enter the forest, it must have been that barrier which caused Argen to become frightened all of a sudden. It seems like the barrier is concealed somehow, even my senses didn’t pick it up.

“A barrier that rejects people? Then, was it an application of magic of the spiritual control system of Ghost Magic?”

“Exactly”

So it’s a type of spiritual control. Thanks to our battle with the demon we have a control immunity skill and Urushi has resistance towards mental skills so I guess we didn’t notice when we came here last time.

“But, it seems like something that has penetrated the barrier. Like you people”

“...”

Argen was glancing at Fran, but that can’t be helped.

[Fran, it’s best if we apologize]

“Sorry”

Fran made a clean and deep bow. Good! Sincerity is important when apologizing.

“What do you mean?”

We took out a bunch of Ghost Grass we had left and put it on the ground.

“Mistook it as growing wild”

“It was you?”

“Returning”

“No, I’m grateful for the feeling but, you should keep that”

“Don’t need?”

It seems it’s no problem to take some and make potions ordinarily, but it seems the quality his master seeks is not normal.

“Just pick it up”

“Understood. But it’s not really such a great prize”

It seems like the quality of Ghost Grass deteriorates slightly when it’s touched by the living.

“I was troubled”

“Not using all this?”

“How to say it? Ummm...”

“What?”

“I don’t know, I have to ask my master”

Maybe, if his master is concentrating on alchemy he could be really good at that too. It’s a bit wasteful, but it’s best if we still return this Ghost Grass.

Then, the skeleton asked me with an apologetic tone.

“I cannot carry this much. I’m really sorry but...”

“Got it. Will carry”

It's something we got ourselves into, it can't be helped...

"Thank you!"

"Argen. What will you do?"

"I'll come too. I'm related to the issue after all. Besides, the colony belongs to someone, so I would like to ask if we may keep harvesting some Ghost Grass in the future"

"Then, let's go! Ah, I'm Bernardo by the way"

Name: Bernardo

Race: Skeleton (Skeletal Undead)

Condition: Contract

Status Level 4

HP:40, MP:183, STR:23, END:17, AGI:34, INT:122, MGC:61, DEX:38

Skills

Darkness Resistance LV.4, Sword Arts Lv.1, Harvesting Lv.3, Regeneration Lv.3, Vibration Operation Lv.2, Dark Magic Lv.1, Magic Manipulation

Titles

none

Explanation: A dead body which moves through magic. Many serve a necromancer. They generally have a low intelligence, but posses regeneration and will keep moving until its Magic Stone is destroyed or until it's magical power is cut off. Threat Level F.

Magic Stone postition: Torso

For a skeleton this guy has high intelligence huh. Magical power too. Even though the explanation said they have low intelligence. Is it not just a skeleton after all?

"I am Argen"

"I'm Fran. This is Urushi"

"On!"

"Hou... A Darkness Wolf huh?"

"Know of it?"

"I have only received knowledge about it from Master"

Bernardo looks closer at Urushi. Although it's just a slightly special-made skeleton it seems Urushi is a bit afraid. Well, he wins overwhelmingly in combat strength though. I think we've walked for about an hour. In the middle of a wilderness, just north of the forest, there is a small hut.

"We're here"

A small hut at a prairie, that's what comes to mind.

It's not at all big, and certainly doesn't look like the home of a powerful necromancer.

"Ragged"

"My master does not care much about such things"

"Fufufu. That's right"

"!"

"Guruu!"

There was a sudden voice from behind. There was no premonition, even though I have the detection skills active and we even have Urushi here!

[I couldn't feel him!]

(Nn)

(Oun!)

Fran and Urushi are ready to go at any time. I also start charging up with magic power.

"Wh, Who is it?"

"When asking a person's name, is it not appropriate to name oneself first?"

"M, My apologies. I am Argen, an adventurer"

"Fran. Who are you?"

"Sorry. He's my master"

So, this is the necromancer in question!

If we had encountered him without knowing anything, we would have definitely attacked!

A dusky black robe. A multitude of skull-themed accessories. Morbidly white skin. His face was mostly shadowed by the robe, and all I could see was a wide smile that seemed to reach all the way to his ears. I think it's a man, but I can't be certain.

He's super suspicious. He really seems like an evil necromancer.

The necromancer introduces himself loudly while his rope flutters in the wind.

"Fuhahahahaha!! My name is Jean Dovey! The one who shall become the supreme lord of the undead!!"

I really don't want to be involved with this one. I want to just have Fran turn around and leave the way we came. This guy was that really annoying loudmouth type of guy...



CHAPTER 66

JEAN DOVEY

“Fuhahahahahahaha!! My name is Jean Dovey! The supreme lord of the undead!”

It was a suspicious person in a slightly inaccessible atmosphere shouting a monologue. If there's even an incident, there is no doubt this guy would be really suspected to have caused it.

Name: Jean Dovey

Age: 49

Race: Demonkin

Job: Dark Guru

Condition: normal

Status : Level 45

HP:180, MP:616, STR:91, END:93, AGI:119, INT:179, MGC:226, DEX:123

Skills

Darkness Resistance Lv6, Chant Abbreviation Lv4, Appraisal Lv8, Sign Concealment LvMAX, Kin Summoning Lv8, Staff Arts Lv4, Ghost Operation Lv8, Ghost Magic LvMAX, Dagger Arts Lv2, Compounding Lv7, Poison Resistance Lv3, Poison Knowledge Lv7, Fire Magic Lv3, Netherworld Magic Lv5, Medicinal Herbs Knowledge Lv4, Dark Magic Lv5, Absolute Sign Concealment, Ghost Rampage, Friend of the Dead, Magic Manipulation, Magic Power Boost

Unique Skills

Soul Eye

Titles

Scales of Assassination, Undead Creator, Slaughterer, Necromancer, King of the Dead

Equipment

Dragon Bone Staff, Dead King's Robe, Demon's Shoes, Bracelet of Death, Substitution Bracelet

Absolute Sign Concealment? That certainly explains why I didn't notice him.

Regardless, he's strong. His physical status isn't that high but magical status and skills are considerable. He is just a little weaker than Klimt, the Guild Master of Alessa.

And this guy is the necromancer huh. Being able to completely hide himself from detection means he can force you to fight only his undead in battle. I'd prefer if we don't have to fight this guy.

"Are you a demonkin perhaps?"

Argen's voice sounds quite terrible.

"Hohou! So you know?"

"Yes, you can glimpse the horns at the top under the robe, and those claws and fangs. Also, pure white skin is another characteristic of demonkin"

"You've studied quite well. Yes! I am a demonkin indeed"

"Well, it's rare to see one around here, so I was surprised"

"There are not many of us demonkin on this continent, that's true. We mostly live on the eastern continent"

Are demonkin a type of human? I am a little worried, but it might be that my common sense is a bit wierd, like how I thought about Ghost Magic. Anyways, it doesn't seem like demonkin are all enemies of humans at least.

"So, where are you guys from? It seems like Bernardo has brought you here huh"

"Yes, they seem to have a problem"

"Hm? Oh well, let's talk in the laboratory for the time being. Come along"

"Everyone, please come this way"

Is that cabin the laboratory? What should we do. I don't think he's an enemy but...

Fran and Argen are already following him, so I guess I'll just pay attention.

[Urushi, pay attention you too]

(On!)

"Hahaha! Welcome to our abysmal institute of darkness and death!"

He's acting extravagantly, but, the laboratory... Maybe the outside is just camouflage and the inside as a state-of-the-art institution with tons of equipment? NOPE!

It's wider than I thought but that's about it. Other than that, it was just a normal mountain cabin like I had thought.

"Laboratory?"

Fran seems to have the same question.

"Hahaha! Since my experiments are often accompanied by danger, the main body of the laboratory is in the basement so that the surrounding area will not be damaged. Do you want to see it? Fufufu, let's say that curiosity killed the dragon. Kukuku!"

I see. Certainly, I can feel magical power from underground. What Jean says is true. On one hand I want to see, on the other I don't... It's the laboratory of a necromancer. It must be like a slaughterhouse! Corpses, one after another.

"Here you go"

Bernardo is arranging tea cups at the table. He was wearing an apron before I knew it. It gives off a surprisingly human vibe.

"Thanks?"

Wow, looks poisonous... The liquid in the tea cups is a reddish purple. Is that really tea? Or does it only look like poison? However, Jean took a cup and downed it all at once.

“Mm, this excellent fragrance. Exotic taste. It truly is the best”

Really? Well, the Crisis Detection isn't reacting, and we have Abnormal Condition Resistance too.

“It's ok”

Fran gently returned the cup to the tray after drinking the mysterious tea. I'll let her eat something to get the taste out of her mouth later.

“So, Bernardo, what happened?”

“Well, the thing is...”

Bernardo explains the circumstances to Jean. Uwaa~, he's looking this way.

“I see. Is there a lot of Ghost Grass?”

“You can't use this?”

Fran takes out the Ghost Grass, but Jean shakes his head.

“It's useless. If a living being has touched Ghost Grass even once their life force will contaminate it. It's not a problem for normal use but it's not useable to my purposes”

It's no good huh.

“Well, it can't be helped. I don't own the land that field is on, and I hadn't even put up a sign or anything”

“If you’re willing to overlook it we would truly be grateful”

“How about making the Ghost Grass you guys picked up be a present?”

“Really?”

“Really... BUT!”

“Uh”

Jean suddenly shouted loudly and started grinning. Hey, you even shocked Fran! This guy’s behaviour is really hard to predict.

“To be sure, it was something I cultivated right?”

“Nn”

“There’s no way there won’t be any compensation right? Naturally, just lowering your head won’t be enough”

Aah, it’s this kind of development? Well then, what will he want. Money? Or some medicine or material for an experiment? Maybe something we have to fight to obtain.

Fran and Argen are looking at Jean waiting, and the tension in the lab is high.

“Shall I have this girl here accept a request of mine?”

“Request?”

“Yes. Of course, I’ll pay you the fee. How about 200 000 Gorudo?”

“Content?”

“Of course, it’s not compulsory. Even if you are obliged to do it, it’s annoying to make you do it”

“Um, what is it you want me and Fran-jouchan to do?”

“As for you, nothing”

“Nothing...”

“Yes. You’re not needed”

“Is that so?”

“Therefore, you go home. Even if I sit here, it’s disturbing”

So, it's convenient if Argen just goes home? If it comes down to a run-in with Jean it's probably better if he's not here.

"Argen, bye bye"

"Even jouchan!? Okay, I got it. Then let me be rude for just a moment, just once"

"What?"

"She is still an adventurer, please make a formal request at the guild"

"Fufufu. Got it. If I do not, will the guild be causing trouble?"

"Well, probably"

Hou, Argen-kun, you played a good hand there. With this, Jean cannot ask something impossible of Fran.

"I understand. Since I'm an adventurer"

E? Seriously? I didn't see that coming at all. I cannot imagine him walking through mountains and dungeons at all.

"Is that so?"

"Really?"

"Yes. A Rank B adventurer!"

He took out a silver card from his pocket while saying so. True enough, he seems to be a rank B adventurer. Ain't he a senior huh?

"Then, I'll be leaving it to you, ojouchan"

Argen said so and left. Still, it's good that we got the promise to periodically buy Ghost Grass.

“Well then, before moving on to the main subject...”

“Nn?”

“Now we have no hindrances in the way”

Mu. That smile looks really evil. Is he suddenly revealing his true nature? Crisis Detection isn't reacting at all!

“That sword”

He points at me. Perhaps his target is me? Are you going to say you want to be offered me or what?

“Now, don't you mind talking anymore?”

“!”

“Kukuku, I understand! Also, the soul that lives within that sword! You can speak with Telepathy, can you not! Now, show me your true nature! Kahahahahaha!!”

CHAPTER 67

CAUSE FOUND

Have my thoughts come true? What does it mean?

“.....”

“My eyes can’t be deceived, my skill ‘Soul Eye’ is a skill that can target the soul! I’m looking at the soul directly! Appraisal blocking is meaningless! Fuhahahaha!”

Seriously? It’s an appraisal skill that can’t be blocked? Gallas had a similar skill, magic eye skills were scary! Damn! What will I do? Should I keep my mouth shut? No, I shouldn’t hurry.

Jean nods with his hand on his chin, while the tension is increasing over here. “I saw some rare things! Intelligent weapon for one. Performance is sufficient, and if I can borrow your power, my long cherished wish will be well within my grasp!”

[Wish?]

“Oh, so you finally speak. Sword, it’s a strange experience to talk with a speaking sword! It’s funny but pleasant!”

[Is that so.]Wow, it’s tiring when the tension is too high.

“Well, I’ll have to give you an explanation of the request so you guys can help me.”

Hmm? I feel like I don’t want anything. Simply, he just wanted to know if I could really talk?

[Hmm, you know I am an intelligent weapon, is there nothing else?]

“What do you mean?”

[No, I mean, do you want me?]

“Can I have you if I want you?”

[Never! I will not give myself over.]

“If you don’t want to give yourself to me then I don’t really have any interest.”

[Do you really not want me?]

“Well... I don’t need you.”

It feels like a lie, but he’s not lying at all. It seems he really isn’t interested. I really do not need him to be serious. Well, I feel a bit frustrated, but I feel more relieved.

“Are you satisfied? Shall I explain the request? Kukkuku.”

What kind of impossibly difficult demands are you going to throw at us? Thoughts of human experiments and assassinations are swimming in my head.

“The request is to aid in my exploration!”

It was an ordinary request. Huh? Really?[Exploration? Where are you going?]

“Well, I’m glad you would like to help me, the location is not far, and with me, you can arrive in less than 30 minutes.”

The place isn’t that far, I hope it is not a dungeon. Some say there is a dungeon around a field near here. But Jean has betrayed my expectations before.

[Are we aiming to go to a dungeon with a den of the undead inside?]

“Huh?”

No, no, if there is a dungeon in that area, we haven’t heard any information from Alessa. What does this mean?

[I did not hear this information in Alessa]

“Of course you didn’t. After all, I’m the only one that knows.”

[Did you hide the information?]

“Well, there isn’t an obligation of reporting it. Because disaster could occur, reporting is recommended, but it’s not that bad even if we don’t.”

“News to me.”

“If you report it you’ll receive a reward, so most would report, but the location of the dungeon isn’t exactly in this country, rather it’s not of any country, so there’s no need to report.”

“?” (Fran)

A place not belonging to any country? Is it a buffer zone or something?

“Fufufu. You’re troubled.”

[Can you tell me the location immediately?]

No, maybe I don’t want to know.

“Well, let me tell you the history of discovering that dungeon!”

“Hmm” (Fran)

“Ask!”

[Impossible!]

As a result, Jean spoke vainly, sprinkled with gestures.

“About ten years ago appearances of the undead were frequently reported in the area. In the village of Neel, somehow, the sightings of undead were higher than other demon beasts.”

We heard something about that from Agen. So the ghost grass has been useful.

“Originally, as a necromancer, I came to survey the area. I continued my research steadily, scolding my heart that seemed to break sometimes, I made efforts through sweat and blood.”

“Ah-” (Fran)

Fran, you don't have to applaud!

"As a result, I made a big discovery! I found several strange spells of magical reservoirs! Fahahaha! It will be amazing!"

"Magical reservoirs?"

"It's a phenomenon where the magical powers of the natural world accumulate in one place by various factors, and a beast is born from stagnant pools of magical powers."

"Ho."

"However, attributes that resemble ghost magic has been added to the magical pond I had discovered. Of course, it's not that there was no magical unbalance among the puddle's attributes. Volcanos' magical reservoirs which have a strong fire attribute means it's easy to create demon beasts of the fire attribute, just as water attributes are most likely to be born around water."

"Then, from ghost attribute reservoirs, the undead are born?"

That's why there's a lot of undead.

"Yes, I guess it's pretty funny though."

"What's wrong?"

"This is just a plain, I've examined records from ancient times but there's no site of an old battlefield nor underground tomb. I investigated the vegetation and plant life, but the factors that might strengthen ghost attributes are missing. So why is there a magical reservoir with ghost attributes?"

"Well?"

[Hm?] If you ask me, the big question is why?

"Possible factor?"

Jean suddenly got up and walking around with wild gestures, making the tension in the room grow.

“Someone is deliberately doing so! Well! I initially thought so, for example, it might be part of military operations of the Raids kingdom of the North and the kingdom of Belio.”

[Was that wrong?]

“In the first place, it’s impossible to artificially create a magic reservoir and add more attributes and the likes. I haven’t heard of any succeeding but there are few studying.”

“I see.”

“Then I examined if there was anything in common with magic reservoirs.”

Jean looks back at the bag and points to it. It seems like when a detective is showing off a guess.

“Something?”

“Well, before that, do you know the existence of floating islands that travel around?”

It’s not that I know, but I’ve seen them. In fact, I could be challenged to land on one, but that seems impossible.

“There’s something that falls from the floating islands sometimes around here, it’s a plant growing in the upper part of the island, or a rock, it varies from time to time.”

[Is that what causes the undead?]

“What a person you are... it is. The magical pool of the ghost attribute and the position of where the objects fell were all the same.”

Wow, if I said the conclusion earlier the tension would have fallen. I bet he wanted to announce it himself. I sit on a chair and spoke frantically. No, this was useless.

“So, because I felt the island was suspicious, I went up there, and I found a dungeon!”

I have completely lost my motivation. Well, I wish it were quiet at least.

“The dungeon is a dungeon of mainly the undead, so the whole floating island is

enveloped in the ghost attribute and is sticking to everything, including the objects that fall as well.”

“Floating island a dungeon?”

“Whether it was a dungeon core born in the sky and picked up by a nearby floating island or a dungeon core that occurred inside the floating island, as far as I know, that is the only floating island dungeon.”

Dungeon cores not only appear on the ground, but also in the sky? Does the core that was created in the air fall and crack? No matter how much the core is protected by barriers, if it falls from high altitude it will not come out unscathed.

“There’s no such thing, as the strange power seems to work and the core will not move from the spawned point unless there’s a special reason. If it is in the air it will be left there, so that even if it’s swallowed by water it does not move.”

“Reason?”

“For example, if the core on a floating island moves like this, though it’s an old record, it seems that there has been a dungeon core inside a gigantic golem that turned into a moving dungeon. It will be an exception, do you understand?”

Truly a mysterious object created by the chaotic god himself. There’s still so many mysteries.

“How did you get there?”

“If you become a magician there’s various ways.”

[Does the floating island not belong to any country?]

He said such a thing a little while ago? Is it not the jurisdiction of the kingdom of Kranz that we are in now.

“It’s because of the migratory route of the island that a country can lay claim on it, right now it’s just a little over the Raids kingdom and the Belio kingdom. So it doesn’t yet belong to anyone. Even the landing troops can not be sent and so the existence of the dungeon is not cleared up.”

“I see.”

“But it’s a nasty thing, the dungeon is quite dangerous. It’s also a golden egg. If you know that there is a dungeon on a floating island where there is little danger of those on the ground, you will get it by any means possible, even if it causes military actions”

[Is it okay that we go there without permission?]

“I have to get it out of the way.”

Do you mean it’s dangerous?

“Well, I will say again, will you accept the request? We will go to the dungeon of the floating island and carry out a search of the inside.”

[How long do you consider exploring? Do you aim for capture or something else?]

“Of course, my aim is capturing. If you attack the dungeon and capture it, it would douse the fire between nations.”

Certainly if you destroy the dungeon core and get rid of the dungeon there will be no war over it. Huh? Is he actually a nice guy? Such a stupid... !

“But, if it seems difficult, capture a certain beast to return to the ground”

[Capture a beast?]

“What kind?”

“The beast’s name is Dead Eater. Undead yet it eats the undead, it’s a demon with a threat level B. Even if you can not capture it in the current , if you add the ghost beast as your subordinate you can make future progress.”

[Threat level B?]

“Originally I was going to use a potion of ghost grass to advance my capture but if you are as skilled as I think you guys are, it’s more secure than potions or anything like them.”

“I’m fired up.” (Fran)

Well, what to do? Danger is dangerous. However, it seems to be worth it. Besides, going to a floating island is a big deal

“What will you do?”

(I want to go to the dungeon.) (Fran)

That’s right. I do too. Besides, it’s an unspoiled dungeon, isn’t it? It’s also great to visit a floating island. As a result of consulting Fran, we decided to accept the request.

“Okay! Let’s do our best! FAHAHAHAHA! It’s becoming fun!”

CHAPTER 68

UNFORESEEN INSIGHT

We decided to take Jean's request.

"Well, let's introduce ourselves again! My name is Jean Dovey, the one who faced the darkness, looked into the abyss of wisdom and is the overlord of the immortal!"

Well, while he is a necromancer, is he also a researcher? It somehow feels as if I'm getting used to Jean's actions. Unfortunately.

"I am Fran. Black cat family. I like curry and pancakes. This is Urushi."

"Ou!" (Urushi)

"I'm seeing it for the first time but it seems it'd make a good companion if it was undead." (He's talking about making Urushi undead and obey him)

"Oun!"

"No good."

"Hahahahaha."

[It's not a lie nor a joke that I am an intelligent weapon. The name Fran gave me is Teacher.]

"Ho, your name is Teacher?" Ah! Is it impossible for him to read the mood? "It's an eccentric name, it is! It's good, I love it!"

It was a funny one.

“Nn.” (Fran)

The two people shook hands. However, I will negotiate so that the reward for the request will be changed slightly.

“Fewer rewards,” (Fran)

“Why?” (Jean)

[Instead, we want the magic stones.]

“Magic stone? Is that a good enough payment?”

[Yes?]

“Well, well, what are you going to use it for?”

[Well... ...]As expected, he asked.

“Hmm... ... I see, I see.”Jean brings his face closer to me. Being watched feels terrible!

[What? What is it?]

“The magic stone's value.....”

[!]

“Maybe you can convert the magic stone into an energy of some sort?”

“What do you know?” (Fran)

“Guru” (Urushi.)

“Kuku, with my Soul Eyes secrets are meaningless. You want a magic stone so you have some use for it. It's a mystery but there can only be one answer!”

Wow, what vain thinking! It's completely perfect! In the first place, can he use such an appraising skill?

“You look frustrated, did I hit the mark?”

[So?]

“Fahahaha, it was a joke, but it seems to be the right answer!”

It's over! I've been caught by his trap perfectly.

“Goa....”

Urushi, don't look at me with eyes like you're surprised. You have wide eyes too!

[Damn!]

I've gotten stuck. I brush my hair back in my mind. You guessed a crazy thing! No, I may be influenced by Jean. Perhaps it hasn't done any damage to Fran's education. I might kill Jean if he laughs like "hahahaha" again.

“But if you're a magic sword that eats magic stones, that's fun. And... perhaps you don't only gain powers but skills as well?”

[!]

Hey, do you really understand? There's no surprise in your voice anymore. Rather, for reference, I would like to ask why.

[Why do you think so?]

“Is that actually right? Hahahaha, truly?”

[I never thought you could see through it.]

“Surprise.”(Fran)

“It's simple. The first thing I noticed was your skills, there were too many similarities, so I guessed that you could share skills with her.”

[I see.]

“That means that some skills are from your skill, but how could you have such a versatile skill? Even if you're legendary, how many skills could you have? I thought there must have been a way for you to grow your skill.”

Everything is being seen through.

“In addition, the composition of the skill is somewhat funny, so you can infer that you didn't grow your skills through natural means.”

[Huh? The skill composition is weird?]

“What do you mean?” (Fran)

“Did you not notice it yourselves? For example, it's weird to have abnormality tolerance.”

Normally, in order to acquire abnormality tolerance, seven or more lower abnormality tolerance skills such as poison resistance and paralysis resistance are required, and it seems that the total of all skill levels must exceed 40. However, we only have poison resistance: lv.3; drowsiness tolerance: lv 1; disease tolerance: lv 3 and paralysis resistance: lv 2. Well, it does seem strange.

Besides, although Dark magic is only lv 2, I have Darkness magic. Even if I shouldn't have it yet, I do have it. There's also no swordsman, but swordmanship is there. The more I looked, the more the skills seemed weird.

“Therefore, I thought that you are acquiring skills with something else, though I thought that you could have taken them away with Skill Taker, but it feels a bit unnatural.”

His reasoning is perfect! No, I guess if one had a bit a knowledge and insight they could probably figure that out as well. If so, I have to be careful with people with magic eyes in the future.

Well, it can't be helped if this happens. I decided to tell Jean everything. I asked him if he could help us with collecting magic stones if we helped with exploring.

“Hahahaha! Good idea, it sounds interesting. That is, do you have to have the magical stone in order to absorb the skill from a magical beast that possesses that skill?”

“Nn.”

“Please assist me. I will help you two onto a large boat! Huhahahaha!”

Uwaa, this guy is suspicious, but the fact that he's a necromancer is authentic. The dungeon heading over us now is the undead dungeon. Some confidence can be expected.

“Do you know there's an evil spirit with skills like yours?”

“Where is it?” (Fran)

“Ou?” (Urushi)

“There's a high possibility that it is also on the floating island. Because it is the evil spirit of a demon beast!”

[Wow. What kind of evil spirit?]

“Huh, do you know the evil spirit called a memetic spirit?”

“Don't?” (Fran)

Jean laughs and shakes his head. Urushi is shaking his neck fur in the same way. I also do not know.

“As the name implies, it's a demon that mimics a wall and attacks those who approach. Well, it's not that strong so it won't be a problem if you don't notice the surprise attack.”

[What kind of skills does it possess?]

“It has mimicry skills as the name suggests. Its other interesting skill is appraisal disturbance.”

Appraisal disturbance seems to be a skill that doesn't allow one to be appraised accurately. Unlike appraisal blocking, it only weakens it. If the level goes up, lower leveled appraisals can be invalidated.

[Will we have our appraisal cut off?]

“A skill with good appraisal disturbance?”

“No, it's different! It's preemptive to this point!”

[Hey. Well then why did you talk?]

“Because I wanted to talk!”

“... ..” (Fran)

“Ku.” (Urushi)

[Oh, I see.]

“It's still a story that doesn't not matter.” (so it matters a little)

Sometimes among memetic spirits there seems to be a mixture of evil spirits, like a supernatural species, a spoofed spirit. (So sometimes there's a fake spirit that acts like a mimicry spirit) Since it is threat level D, it seems to be quite strong. But because it's difficult to distinguish from a real mimicry spirit, it seems weird to put them in a different group.

“And this disguising spirit is the beast I recommend for you!”

“Why?” (Fran)

“Well, as the name implies, it possesses a unique skill for camouflaging, which doesn't simply preventing appraisals, but allows you to show false information at a whim.”

[So it could purposely make someone come to a false conclusion?]

“Oh, that's the most fearsome part of the skill, it's far more troubling than just blocking.”

Appraisal blocking is a skill that prevents opponents from finding out information

about you. In other words, the only appraisal result the opponent gets would be whatever wasn't blocked. The information that could not be obtained remains.

But what about camouflage? By releasing fake information, the possibility that the appraisal was prevented seems low, and if one believes the information they got, it will be easier to surprise them. In other words, you will be able to stay ahead in the war of information.

“And it's possible to combine it with appraisal blocking. After you block a little information and let the false information slip, the false information seems that much more believable! I think it's a very terrible combination.” (Jean)

“In addition, appraisal camouflage is a unique skill so it will also be effective against most magic eyes. Most of the skills in the demon eye system can be prevented with this!”

“I want it.” (Fran)

[Oh, I absolutely want it.]

“Ou!” (Urushi)

“Fahahahaha, leave it to me. In the last exploration I already found where a mimetic spirit is!”

“Oh great.” (Fran)

[Truly someone we can rely on.]

“Ou Ou Ou!” (Urushi)

“Hahahaha! Don't be afraid to speak the truth, don't be shy!”

No seriously, I wasn't expecting that. Also, Jean might be a little cool. It looks like he's seriously shining. You may not be accustomed to being praised by people, but lift yourself by yourself.

[Ah! Too bright!]

“Oh!” (Fran)

“Ooo” (Urushi)

“Fahahahahaha!”

CHAPTER 69

GHOSTS

The next day, we went down the stairs. Last night I was asked to stay at Jean's cottage... Well, the night when the mind is not so sharp brings a morning of refreshness.

Occasionally I could hear a mysterious groaning voice, explosions from underground and sounds of people moving outside my room. How does Fran sleep so well! I am glad she is a heavy sleeper though.

Breakfast is a fried purple egg and a black-green soup, and there was also a pale blue milk-like drink and fried mystery meat. The rest also had mystery meat and blue milk.

It seems that the taste is not bad, but it's still scary. Fortunately it did not cause an abnormal state, but is it really okay? I confirmed it with Fran and Ursi about 5 times.

"Come here."

After that, Bernardo guided us to a stairway so we could get down to the basement, where the self-proclaimed laboratory was. No, when you get down to the basement, there were plenty of facilities. It was rude to call this self-proclaimed.

"You seem surprised at the true form of our laboratory."

[It's pretty amazing.]

"Cool."

"Ou."

There was a huge magic circle drawn in the middle of the floor, tools like a sickle and a cane were hung on the wall and instruments like flasks and mortars were left in a cluttered mess. Poisonous medicinal herbs and ore sat in pots and baskets, and there was even a big kettle with a strange liquid boiling inside.

How nice! I would definitely call this a laboratory, it feels like a workshop. It has an atmosphere like a secret laboratory of a necromancer. I want to try all sorts of teasing!

“What’s there?”

“Do you mind?”

“Smell of blood.”

“Ha ha ha, as expected of a beastman, your nose seems to be good. This is the room where dead bodies are kept. It has strengthened walls for the more dangerous experiments I did a little while ago!”

It sounds casual, like some sort of corpse store. Truly like a necromancer. Did you die? Are we alright?

“Well, let's prepare. You guys have dimensional storages, so can you bring a variety of items?”

“Leave it to me.”

Should we carry luggage? Well, our odds of survival will rise, so I will bring as much as I can.

“First of all, with this and this, Oh, I will bring this too, that is also necessary, I wonder, I will bring this and this, anyway I am not carrying it. Then, with this and that -”

[Isn't that too much?]

A small mountain was made on the floor in a matter of seconds. From potion-like objects to strange instruments, there's a lot of variation. Inside, there were amusing skeleton-shaped lamps, pendants that simulated zombies, and tools that I would hesitate to even touch.

“Sniff”

[Those, Urushi! Stop it. Do not know what that does!]

“Kuu ...”I can not smile because it could be seriously cursed.

[It can't be helped, I'm going to put half of it in.]

“Hmm.”

While listening to Jean saying who knows what, we finished stowing the items in about an hour.

“We're ready!”

[Is it finally time to start?]

“Finally.”

“Yes, let's go.”

We left the laboratory with Jean leading us. The question is, how do we get to the floating island?

[What is the way to go to Floating Island?]

“Teleportation?”

“Hey, I'm a necromancer, I don't use magic like that!”

Does that mean there is a technique of flying in the sky for evil magic or nether witchcraft?

“Well?”

“Fahahaha. Well keep watching! You'll know soon! Bernardo!”

“Yes!”

“Are you ready?”

1. Where did you come from? B. When did you get here?

“Bernardo will guide you to the back of the laboratory. There is a magic circle about

10 meters in diameter, and magic stones were arranged on top of it in a regular pattern.”

“Well! It is good!”

“Thank you for the hard work.”

“Let's show it at once! Pay attention to the essence of my magic!”

Jean who screamed so, crossed his hands in front of himself and pushed up towards the bag and the sky. He began to recite spells without notice.

It is perfectly a behavior of someone else (Tl: it said Kitami, but who knows who that is), but now it suited Jean well. I was watching from the yards and I had no sense of incongruity at all.

“Cool”

“Ou!”

Well, I can't deny it. Continuously spiraling while saying an aria, strike a pose, a spiraling magical spirit swirls around Jean as he continues casting spells, it's certainly like a cool magician.

“----”

“----”

Even so, it takes a long time. He has been chanting for about 3 minutes now. It has this long of a chant.

And after another 3 minutes.

“---- Overspec · Undead · Summoning!”

Along with a powerful cry, the magic circle lights up in jet black light. It is such an overwhelming sight that the black light fountain is shining vigorously from the

ground.

“Kahahaha, please come out, my servant! Your name is Andy!”

“Goo-san!”

[Wow! What is that!]

“Great!”

“Guruuuu!”

We saw the foot that appeared to crawl out of the magic circle, we were surprised. Fran’s eyes shone brightly, but Urushi raised his guard. I was also a bit wary.

When the ceremony ended, the skeleton Jean summoned exceeded the magic circle’s length of 10 meters. It’s probably a Wyvern. Not the Lesser Wyvern that I fought before, but the larger, more powerful genuine Wyvern.

“Ha ha ha..... How is Kuhahahagahogo ho! How is it! Isn’t it amazing!”

His heart was throbbing, he was sweating and his breathing was rough - I guess it was more tiring than I’d thought... But the result is worth bragging about. It’s so cool, and has such a strong magical power...

Race name: Skeleton · Wyvern ·

Overspec: Ghost Story: Monster Lv 30

Condition: Contract, weak point relaxation

HP: 1034

MP: 433

Foot strength: 539

Physical strength: 551

Agility: 531

Intelligence: 10

Magical power: 93

Devices: 55

Skills:

Threat: Lv 6, Covert: Lv 3, Appraisal Disturbance: Lv 3, Depression: Lv 6, Reproduction: LvMax, Magical Barrier: Lv 5, Vengeance, Poison Invalid.

The status far exceeds Lesser Wyvern. Also, I have one skill I have not seen.

[A Ghost? I haven't seen this before...]

Ghost Spirit: Complex skills of superior evil spirits who have a strong grudge.

Due to the influence of appraisal disturbance, the effect is not understood at the same time.

“The evil spirit is a synthetic skill that combines several skills. The effects include Flight, Magic use, Physical tolerance, Mental status resistance, Grudge conversion, a status increase, Light magic resistance, Recovery magic obstruction and Purification. It becomes a skill that combines weak points of necromancy.”

Indeed, it is a skill that combines various effects. It would be difficult to fight.

“Although it has beneficial effects such as flying, it can be said that it is a double-edged sword that also increases its weaknesses. Though we can reduce the weaknesses with our magic, worry is unavoidable.”

“Weakness reduction?”

[Now that you mention it, that's how it is. The name is also something strange. Overspec?]

“Well, it is the effect of the technique called Overspec, undead summoning”

It seems to be a technique you can learn at Lv 5 of the Netherworld magic. Is not it a high level technique! The effect also has a tremendous thing.

Undead's HP, MP, strength, physical strength, agility of +200, play Lv + 5, weak points

relief, unparalleled performance which is summarized by this technique. Instead, it seems that the undead summoned through it will simply disappear after 24 hours. That's still strong. If the weaknesses of the ghosts are reduced, it will be enough for defense.

No, despite the insecurity of defense, I want the skills of ghosts. If equipped only at the time of movement, you can move by flight.

[Can you get Ghost skills if you go to the dungeon?]

“Do you want to be have ghost skills?”

[Oh, it's the flight that's in there that I want.]

“If it is then, you better absorb this.”

Jean takes out things like jewels from the bosom. It was a special magic tool that can summon the dead spirit who is the Lord of the magic stone by incorporating the Devil's Manastone. It seems to be called a summons ball.

“I will give you a magic stone in this”

[I think it's okay, I think it's a fairly powerful manastone.]

“It's fine, it's a demonic stone called Berserker Ghoul, but it's always a troublesome devil in a frenzied state. It attacks regardless of your friend or friend. Take it as if you have something to use Oh, but let us serve you guys! “

So, I decided to have the magical stone and to be thankful. I will return this debt in the dungeon.

[Fran!]

“Ou!”

Oh!

I will cut a magic stone thrown into the air by the Fran.

It's been a long time since I've had such a powerful magic stone. And I get a ghost skill, a decaying fang: Lv 1,. The decaying rot makes the partner rot, that is, it seems to be a corrosive attack.

And, vampire skills. Lucky. I got a means of flying with this. I might even be able to go to floating island by myself.

[I will equip it immediately]

“Okay!”

Devil skill set!

[Oh, oh?]

“Fluffy”

What is this feeling. As Fran says, it's fluffy and strange. I can see something. warm. It sounds like a sunny day Oh, I feel good.

“This is! Dude, hey, Teacher, you're dangerous! Get rid of your evil skill now!”

[Wow?]

“Gow Gow Gow!”

Something like a dog is barking. It would happened to be towards?

“Are you listening? Get rid of your evil skills!”

[Nanka, like rising into heaven -]

“Master please!”

Ah, pleasure -.



Ah, it was dangerous. I was literally ascending.

“Are you okay?”

[Oh, I'm fine.]

Apparently it seems that strong grudge skill is necessary, as its name suggests, in order to control evil skills. I do not have such a thing, evil skill set → no grudge → There is nothing to remember → Buddha! That's what it seems to have become.

Fran should be like that as well, but it seems that it did not become a compulsory Buddha visit due to the connection between the body and the soul, instead it just became a state of trance.

In the case of myself, because the soul is contained in the instrument called the sword, the power to hold back to this world seems to be weak.

Evil skill is sealed.

“Well, I got interesting data! Thank you!”

[I almost died!]

“Ha ha ha, I got a valuable information, is that not enough?”

Damn. In this case, he is seriously talking about his bad feeling.

[Hey. enough. Let's start quickly.]

“Then, get on Andy”

“Hmm”

“Because there are so many places to grab, hold on where ever you want”

Well, it's a bone. Fran is caught between the wings and holds the spine tightly. Urushi

returned to her shadow. Jean is sitting on his neck.

“Are you ready?”

“Nn”

“Well, let's go, fly away, Andy!”

“Gowohoa!”

Andy started flapping with Jean's shouting. Thinking normally, there is no way to fly with the wings of the bone, but Wyvern 's giant ignored gravity and flew into the sky. It is an effect of the ghost skill.

“Fuha! Aim is the undead's dungeon!”

“Hmm”

CHAPTER 70

ANDY

Jean called out Andy and he is truly capable.

Beyond the extraordinary altitude we have gone beyond a bit, it will rise with Gungun. Moreover, thanks to the magical barriers, coldness and wind pressure are also reduced, and comfort is also comfortable.

“So high!” (Fran)

“Fahahaha, those who live on the ground are like garbage!” (Jean)

“Yeah, trash!” (Fran)

[Stop saying garbage. Ants is cuter!] I only remembered later that calling them ants is still pretty mean...

“I see it!” (Jean)

As we passed through the clouds, an island of huge rocks appeared in front of us, floating in the blue sky. The sight was honestly overwhelming.

[Ooooooooo! Awesome!]

“Nn.” (Fran)

“Ou ou.” (Urushi)

It’s a homerun! I feel touched.

Andy keeps flapping towards the island unaffected.

[Are we going in now?]

“Well, what do you think Teacher? Don’t you want to finally rush into the dungeon?”

(Jean)

“Not on dungeon yet?” (Fran)

“Dungeon is a term that refers to what is in the sphere of influence of the dungeon core, so whatever is in the sky, or rather, whatever the magic power of the dungeon core can reach is part of the dungeon.”

It seems Jean’s words have raised a flag as I felt massive signs of something coming towards us.

[Somethings coming!]

“Until you land on the floating island, some demons named Bone Birds will attack you in a large flock.” (Jean)

“Countermeasure?” (Fran)

“Countermeasure? Fahahahahaha, just break through the front, it’s a flock of small fry.” (Jean)

“I see!” (Fran)

[That’s not the kind of size we can just break through!]

“But they’re faster than Andy, it’s impossible to escape.” (Jean)

[Is there something like a tool or a barrier to eliminate the undead?]

“Tools like that aren’t convenient for such small fry! Though there is a technique to eliminate undead, I can’t use it so close to Andy.”

So we can only break through from the front? Damn, I’ll use brute force then!

“Fahahaha! Andy! Full of rage, but this is good!” (Jean)

“GOOOOOOO!” (Urushi)

“Teacher!” (Fran)

[I can’t be helped! I’ll do it loudly!]

“Wow!” (Fran?)

That’s how we entered a battle with the Bone Bird flock. As individuals, they are G rank. However, there’s around 1,000 birds. Bone Birds cluster like clouds, even if they

were knocked down or defeated, it feels like there's no progress.

With the blessings that Andy releases, Jean's magic, Fran's sword swings, Flying around in the air and Urushi knocking down birds one after another, we're bound to make a dent though...

"- Reverse Undead!" (Jean)

"- Fire, Arrow!" (Fran)

"Gagaoou!" (A beast)

"Gollo Ooh!" (A beast)

Me? I flew away from Fran. Everything was wrong with Jean. I will be missed when I become like this.

What Fran is using now was a phantom sword of the phantom stone that she took from Guillain before. Although it is a sword with the phantom attribute, it also has a small Light attribute so it was quite effective against the undead.

Fran using a sword other than me ... I will endure it.

[Haha! An all you can eat buffet after such a long time! There's so many magic stones to eat!]

For the flock to be this dense. Even if we jumped around randomly, we would be able to beat the birds without pause.

[It's a Magic stone festival!]

"Kisha!"

"Shogyo!"

[That won't work!]

They try to close my movements with the intimidation skill, but such a low level is meaningless to me.

Name: Bone • Bird : Undead : Demon Lv 3

HP: 18

MP: 6

STR: 7

END: 10

AGI: 16

DEX: 3

INT: 1

MAG: 5

Intimidation:Lv1, Beak Attack:Lv1, Evil Spirit

These guys gave me the skill of the Dead, but since these things are evil spirits I should be careful. Rather, I don't think I'll equip it anytime soon... Furthermore, Beak Attack is useless to me, since I don't have a beak...

After 30 minutes, we broke through the flock of Bone Birds and approached the floating island. When you see it up close, it's really impressive.

By the way, the skill Evil Spirit seems to be a combination skill of Flight, Magical Emission, Grudge Conversion, Light Magic Weakness, Recovery Magic Weakness and Greater Purification Magic Weakness.

Also, I was told not to equip it. Not that I plan to.

"Okay." (Jean)

[Finally?]

"No, not yet." (Jean)

[What does that mean?]

"I will know soon - it came!" (Jean)

"Same as Andy?" (Fran)

"Fuha! It looks alike! Andy is a Wind Wyvern skeleton, but they are Lesser Wyverns! They are different grades!" (Jean)

Name: Lesser · Wyvern · Skeleton : Undead : Demon Lv 10

HP: 108

MP: 50

STR: 87

END: 63

AGI: 133

DEX: 12

INT: 1

MAG: 33

Threaten:Lv 3, Covert:Lv 2, Play:Lv 3, Spirit, Poison Nullification

It was a little weaker than the Lesser Wyvern I encountered before, but it seemed that it was going to be hard to beat down with the Play and Undead skills attached. And about 30 such people are there.

Besides that, it is not only that.

[Wow! What's that? Is that a Cannon?!]

"It's a bombardment from the island. It could be a stray bullet shot by mistake. Teacher, concentrate on interception."

[Well, what about the Wyverns?]

"I will deal with them!"

"You will?" (Fran)

"Fran and Mr. Urushi have not completely shake off Bone Bird yet!"

"Roger." (Fran)

"Ou!" (Urushi)

It's the last stretch until we can land.

I intercepted the cannonfire, sometimes crushing the shells directly and sometimes intercepting them with magic. Though there were a lot of shells, I managed to prevent

us getting hit.

[Dangerous!]

It was dangerous. Although I somehow warped the trajectory with magic, if it was a few moments later we would have been run through by the cannonfire.

[Jean! How did you survive this shelling when you landed last time.]

“That time, I was following a Skeleton Griffon! For my fellows who wore wind armor, these attacks were useless! So, I got in from the front!”

Will it ever end? Besides, there is no longer that skeleton that I have not summoned now. It may be called out with overspec.

“Gyo Oho!”

Damn, the wyvern skeletons are getting restless! But because we handled the storm of shells, it got out of hand! It was quite quick, and the attacks of the flock seems not to have been hit directly. If you hit it, you can beat it.

What is this? Is this not silly?

Andy buries its head into a wyvern, biting through fur with its teeth. It's almost as if he's saying “Count on me!”

“Thank you, Andy.” (Jean)

“Goou!” (Andy)

But it's only possible because of Andy pushing himself. It's impossible to manage this number normally. Regeneration is gradually failing to catch up and Andy's HP is dangerously low.

[Jean! What are you doing!]

“Wait a moment! I'm preparing it now!” (Jean)

Then I saw it, Jean was in the middle of putting magical power into a summoning ball. Do you still have a trump card to summon?

“Okay! I’m ready! Teacher, Urushi, get back!”

[Roger that.]

“Ou!” (Urushi)

“Fran, keep still in case of anything! Believe in me!”

“Nn.” (Fran)

“Fahahaha, that’s a good reply.”

[So? What are you going to do?]

“I’m going to do this! Andy, do it!” (Jean)

“Gowawon!” (Andy)

“Waa” (Fran)

[Deformed?]

According to Jean’s command, Andy’s bone body starts to strain and transform. The ribs and sternum swelled, wrapping Jean and Frans, the wings folded like covering the body. Because it’s flying with the evil spirit skill, it won’t affect flight...

It’s as if the wyvern’s neck is growing from a sphere made of bone.

“-Instant summoning!”

Meanwhile, Jean summons a new creature. Instant summoning is a technique to summon a part of a creature for a certain period of time. Although it is much weaker than the main body, there is a merit that even if the body is dead, there is no influence on the main body.

“Slime?” (Fran)

[W-what? Damn it--]

“It’s fine like this!” (Jean)

What Jean called was a bright red slime. The slime started to wrap around us.

[Jean?]

“It’s okay!”

Jean said that we should stay as we are. Hey, hey, is it melting? The undead slime called Undead Ooze has completely covered Andy and the party. Meanwhile, although the shell is bending around Andy, it seems that somehow it is enduring. Though I don’t know how long it will last. What will Jean do?

“Andy! It’s been a rough time.” (Jean)

“Goou!” (Andy)

“Well then!” (Jean)

When Jean ordered, Andy changed directions with hurry. It’s form with his head facing away from the floating island.

“Gaaaooooooooou!” (Andy)

Andy unleashed a powerful breath that he had charged within himself. A tremendous ray paints the sky white. It’s super powerful without a doubt. Andy then curled itself up like a bullet and sped towards the floating island while crushing several wyverns.

“Fahahaha, good! Andy! You’ve done it exactly as planned!” (Jean)

“Fast.” (Fran)

Andy’s magic power is decreasing with tremendous momentum. Hey, isn’t this dangerous? Certainly if an undead runs out of magic power won’t it disappear? But Andy did not stop releasing the breath and the floating island was rapidly approaching gungun.

“Make sure not to bite your tongue, Fran!” (Jean)

“Nn.” (Fran)

Scary!

Immediately afterwards a light shock hits us. Apparently it seems that physical barriers were set up, but in front of Andy, those were useless. And....

“DOGOAGOAOSOGO!”

“Huuuuu”

“Aaa”

“Kyuwen”

[Wow!]

Andy made a huge crater on the floating island. Despite the fact that Undead Oooz received the shock, it was an incredible shock. Anyway, HP is decreasing for everyone. The body of Undead Oooz has disappeared. Andy, who received the shock the most, had not kept its original shape already. Both whole body and manastone are shattered. It's only possible to distinguish half a skull.

“Goou” (Andy)

“Andy, we will not forget your loyalty.” (?)

“Thank you.” (?)

“Nn!” (fran)

“ou!” (Urishi)

[You're amazing.]

“I'll send you the last at my end, sleep peacefully. - Ascension”

“Gou-” (Andy)

From the remnants of Andy, the light rises and raises to the heavens. It was a beautiful

sight.

“Bye bye” (Fran?)

CHAPTER 71

RUSH

Thanks to Andy, two hours after landed on the floating island.

“I saw it, that’s the entrance to the interior of the dungeon!”

We passed through the wandering forest of zombies and skeletons and reached a place like ruins.

There were no noteworthy battles in the forest. The enemies are only lower demon animals, not smart enough to erase any indication of their presence. There are no elements other than a large number that are likely to be a threat. Well, if there’s something of note, it would be the absorption of magic stones and Urushi.

There seemed to be traces of a staircase that descended into the basement in the center of a group of ruins.

“It’s here, the last time I was exhausted before I got here, but this time I still have plenty of time!”

[What should I look out for? There’s plenty of dangerous traps, aren’t there? Last night I heard about a secret plan.]

“Leave the leading to me, you guys should concentrate on battle.”

“all right” (Fran)

“On on!” (Urushi)

“Wait a moment, please.” (Jean)

Jean takes out the summon ball again and begins to cast.

“---- High undead summoning!”

What was summoned was a deadly monster. It looks a little like a zombie? A mummy with good skin? It had such a feeling. Looking at it from a distance, it may seem like a slightly thin person with brown skin. It also wore clothes knitted with warp yarns.

“Thy name is Sercan!” (Jean)

“Va” (Sercan)

Tribal Name: Custom · Revenant: Dead

Spirit: Demon Lv 14

Name: Sercan

HP: 69

MP: 165

Power: 33

Strength: 23

Agility: 66

Intelligence: 109

Magical power: 25

Devices: 93

Skills:

Play: LvMax, momentary playback: Lv 4, trap cancellation: Lv 5, trap detection: Lv 4, playback enhancement

“Kuku, this is a specially made servant whom I made improvements on with custom undead techniques for this day!”

It is a devil devoted exclusively to leadership. It seems to be at the expense of combat power, but playing power is not hampered. Looking for traps and dismantling them, it becomes a wall of flesh that takes on the trap with himself if you don't do it. Well, convenient and incompetent.

“Fahahaha ... I will go, Sercan, lead us!”

“Va!”

However, Sercan was tremendously useful. Most traps canceled out, or it starts and disables them.

It seems that Jean has supplemented the magic power necessary for regeneration, so there is no worry of falling down or death.

“Va!”

Gashakon! (TL: Sound effect)

Oh, it was skewered to the spear that came down from the ceiling! I could not cancel it, nor catch it on purpose and invalidated it. However, Sercan plays it's role immediately and walks as if nothing had happened.

I did not do a good job.

In addition, Jean only said once, but it already grasped its internal. We almost never stopped and we had been searching steadily.

The zombies that occasionally appear are destroyed before attacking fran with my attack.

[Good.]

“Well, here it is not” (Jean)

[What do you mean?]

“The last time, supplies have run out in the hall ahead of us and we’ve had to turn back, so I don’t know what's in there.” (Jean)

“Is there something in the hall?” (Fran)

“There’s a monster room, in which you will see an intermediate demon beast”

Apparently there seems to be a stairway to get down to the basement in a place beyond that hall. The speed of advance will fall considerably. There's probably a new gimmick.

First of all is a hall.

[Well, it's all about the preemptive magic strike.]

"Hmm"

"Oh!"

And annihilation begins. About 30 of the dead spirits collapsed in the first magic. Still, there are still more than 50 bodies left. But that wasn't all. From the magic room, the evil spirits gushed out one after another.

Inside is mixed with intermediate demons such as zombie soldiers equipped with weapons and armor, skeleton warriors, and magical beasts.

[let's go!]

"Hmm!"

"Guru!"

Well, it's not our worst enemy. Rather, a monster room without traps, it's easy for frans to fight. Flame magic works well also.

In only 20 minutes all the spirits were put back into the corpses.

"well done!" (Jean)

[If you have this degree of opponent]

"Oh, novice" (???)

"Nom Nom" (Urushi)

Urushi is as usual. Why doesn't eating zombie meat break your belly? Or is it rather tasty? No, it seems that everything goes well with rot, it's unexpected? Well, I hope it's delicious.

"Do you have any injuries?"

"I'm okay"

Then Jean purifies the room and we decide to take a rest for about an hour. In the meantime I will make a meal but I take out the curry at the request of Fran.

"Oh, supreme" (Fran)

[You never get tired of it.]

Every time let her eat it, she praises me every time. It is not a lie that if I had a tail it would be standing tall.

Jean also had had some curry, and he seems to like it quite a bit. I've changed it twice.

"Mu"

Don't look at me like that Fran! I still have plenty! The children become very aggressive when it comes to food.

Jean gave Urushi the femur of a Skeleton Lizard. He was gnawing on the bone, As Urushi also experienced a blessing.

Because I am have time and am taking a break, I decided to tell Jean about the undead spells. I thought of Amanda at the time, but who better to ask than the lord of the undead himself? I , but I would definitely know who heard the advanced party more than examine himself.

"Kahahaha ... it is difficult to raise knowledge, but you have a good idea! It was good to

hear!"

Jean is a researcher and I thought that if I could hear it would teach me Rather, he was a man of a system he wanted to speak, to talk about things not even heard. As a result, you got to know a lot about the evil spirit.

I was particularly surprised about the concept of the soul. I thought that the undead magic was manipulating the soul of the dead or manipulating it with the soul possessed by the corpse, but that was not the case.

It seems that the power may cause part of the soul that should originally go to the nether world to stay in this world. And the fragments of the soul in which imperfections and power are put together are combined with the magic stone, transforming it into a powerful evil spirit.

So it was generally recommended that a necromancer cast a ghost spirit. Because they can be cleansed by serving a Necromancer and can ascend. For grudge who wanders while suffering with gratitude, it can be called salvation. Besides, if you serve as one body, you will also have 1 Vengeous Spirit that you dislike people. Among them are those who are going through countries to purify the evil spirits and ascend.

"Well, I'm not that kind of fond of getting up to it, instead of ascending, I will lend you my power, a way of saying "Give and Take". Even if I make things disposable, I'm grateful, so laughter will not stop, Yo!"

[I'm telling you, but you used Ascension for Andy, did not you?]

The technique of Ascension which Jean used for Andy was a technique to clear up the grudge of the dead spirit and ascend the fragments of the soul. It was a famous magic typical of nether witchcraft, which was also mentioned in the information examined in the library.

Although it is slight, it is a technique that interferes with the soul, so consumption is severe, depending on the strength of purification grudge it is even to reduce the life expectancy of the caster. Indeed, Jean did not become a fighting force for a while after

it landed. Andy would have disappeared if it left as it was, and one should not use Ascension by force.

“Well, it's about that extent that we can do it, for a short while, for Andy who served with loyalty, he is for the hands at least, are not you complaining?” (Jean)

“No, not for such a good guy” (Fran)

[No complaints]

“on!” (Urushi)

“Is that so, right?” (Jean)

Something, it's a breezy atmosphere. However, Jean seems embarrassed that she made such an atmosphere. My ears are red. And, in order to change the topic, I just started to talk about the future by further raising the voice of the crowd. Well, it's okay though.

“Fufa, Fuha! Well, next will be the second tier!” (Jean)

[Is there any information?]

“No, not at all!” (Jean)

Why do they look great?

“But please be calm. There are measures!” (Jean)

“What?” (Fran)

“This is it!” (Jean)

What Jean took out is a familiar summons ball.

[What's in it?]

“If you see it you will understand! So fufufu, you won't forget it!”

Then Jean began to recite the summoned spell again.

CHAPTER 72

DUNGEON'S CORRIDOR

“ -High undead, summoning!” (Jean)

It appeared from the undead summon stone of Jean's. What came out though? Fog? Vapor? It was something indefinitely whitish.

“Cloud?” (Teacher)

“This is the secret of dungeon capturing, it's a custom ghaſt fly.”

Race name: custom ghaſt

Dead Spirit: Demon lv 7

Name: Fly

HP: 22

MP: 401

Power: 8

Stamina: 13

Agility: 36

Knowledge: 89

Maka: 210

Devices: 19

Skill: Diſſolution: lv 7, Map creation: lv 6, communication: lv 3, ſhadow claſſe: lv 7, magical aſſorption: lv 6, trap detection: lv 3, Evil ſpirit, physical attack nullification

This thing ſeems to ſpecialize exploring.

Fran reaches out to touch it, as well as Urushi who imitates Fran by trying to bite it. Even I cannot catch the fume like fly.

“Oooh” (Fran)

“Wow” (Teacher)

Just this is interesting. The white smoke staggers over and over. If we weren't inside the dungeon, we wouldn't be able to see it.

“Fly can send information from the map creation to me through the mind! Even without doing anything, you can get a map of the dungeon! Kahahaha! I cannot get rid of this shaking by myself!” (Jean)

Certainly, without Fly, mapping would be crazy.

“Go, Fly!” (Jean)

By Jean's order, the fly begins to divide into twenty bodies. One body is weak but it's not battle power we're concerned about. Fly starts to move quietly. At first glance it seems like the smoke is following the air current.

“After about ten minutes we can get a map of what's up ahead.”

“Leave it to me!” (Fly?)

Is it not pampant yet? It's only a small fish. Fran is posing with Urushi, having a motivated face.

“Last time I didn't do this to find out about the floors. I just went ahead to scout.” (Jean)

“So is this structured floors in your mind?” (Teacher) Certainly you're not saying there's no information of this floor at all?

“No, I couldn't break through this area before, so I don't know the layout ahead, but there's no problems as we've made improvements.” (Jean)

“Don't you understand what's ahead?” (Teacher)

“Well, there’s something that I know of only one. It’s the mimic spirit you’re looking for, but it appears up ahead. They are the one that blocked Fly’s way.” (Jean)

“Really? Okay, let’s go!” (Teacher)

“Nn.” (Fran)

“Ou!” (Urushi)

“Before we go, let’s have a drink before the battle” (Jean)

“What is this?” (Teacher)

“Fuhahaha! It’s a specially made spirit potion. It has the effects of reducing damage from the dead and increasing resistance against special attacks such as spirit control.” (Jean)

“Amazingly high-performance! Isn’t it petty valuable.” (Teacher)

“It’s not a big deal. If it’s on the market, it’s about 200,000 gold.” (Jean)

“High!” (Teacher or Fran, I forgot)

200,000 gold is the same as the reward for success. Is this okay?

“For me, it’s not that much money, don’t mind it! We’ll just take more than that in materials.” (Jean)

Truly a B rank adventurer. 200,000 is a lot of money

“Let’s get to it” (Fran)

“Also, feel free to use stuff I give you. It’s me who will be troubled if you leave.” (Jean)

I’m happy with this type of client, because I am a poor man. I hesitate to use items, even with RPGs, leaving things like elixirs and world trees until the end. But that’s dangerous. If Fran was in danger, I guess I wouldn’t say such a thing, but that’s how I usually think.

“We’re going into a long corridor where it extends to the entrance to the second floor, enemies there use hypnotism attacks.” (Jean)

“Well then!” (Teacher)

“Oooo... ..” (spirit)

“Damn! THis one is also different! Well then, you!” (Jean?)

“Oo”

“This is not it!” (Teacher)

“Oooh”

“Owio” (spirits)

“Ah! This is annoying! Which is the spoofed spirit?” (Teacher)

Ghost, Specter, etc. attacks back and forth, right and left, sometimes coming through walls and floor to attack.

But this was the corridor we’ve been looking for. There’s mimic spirits among the attacks. There’s also spoofed spirits which are like subordinates of the mimic spirits.

We are constantly activating the fire attribute to maximize damage, they continue to disguise as dead spirits. Our strategy would be impossible without the magic tank called me. Actually, I raised the level of magic absorption.

Because the bodies of the spirits in the dead system consists of magical power, they’re weak against absorption.

So, because of attacking and magical supply, magic absorption increased to level 3.

With this, the remaining points have decreased to one, but it’s a skill that’ll be advantageous in the long run, I think there’s no loss in raising it.

As a result, if combined with attribute sword, most of the spirits could be knock down in a single shot. My magic power is still around 1500. Afterwards, it would be perfect if I could take an appraisal camouflage from a spoofed spirit.

Actually, it’s easier to annihilate with widespread magic. Then destroy magic stones. I just want to get appraisal camouflage by all means.

“Jean! I can’t find a camouflage spirit?” (Teacher)

“Mm, I have not.” (Jean)

“Are you sure?” (Teacher)

“I don’t understand?” (Jean)

“Believe that’s you’re fighting and fight!” (Teacher)

“Ou ou” (Urushi)

It also places a considerable burden on Fran. If you think that it’s a mimic spirit and attack it, there’s a chance of it being a spoofed spirit. In order to prevent damage to the magic stones, I only have try to attack the mimic spirits.

Then Fran only has to deal with the spirits other than the mimics.

The spiritual abnormality coming from the ghosts are not at all an issue due to Jean’s spirit potion. Physical attacks aren’t a big deal. To Fran, they’re only annoying.

Then 30 minutes into the fight.

“Now is...” (Teacher)

Mimic spirits have a lot of magic I feel like. I hurriedly check my skills.

Obtained appraisal camouflage.

“Damn! It came!” (Teacher)

“Yosh! This is good already.” (Jean)

“Ou!” (Urushi)

“At last” (Fran)

“Oooo” (Fly?)

After that, the furious fighting kept for half an hour more, soon settled down. Everybody used widespread magic so it was completed because of that.

“Nn?” (Fran)

“Oh?” (Jean)

No, even I can see. I wanted camouflage. Well, since it might be hard work, let's give up.

“Congratulations” (Jean)

“I tried to set it, but how is it? Can you see with soul eye? I tried to conceal the skill and to make it look lower than the actual status.” (Teacher)

“Hmm... Well, it's a success, it looks like half the status I saw before.” (Jean)

“What about skills?” (Fran)

“I don't see any skills at all, however, it's better to research a little more. It's doubtful that you don't have any skills. We should adjust it so that it looks safe.” (Jean)

“Oh, I know.” (Teacher)

How to disguise it?

Well, I'm having fun. Showing the disguised status to those who appraise Fran. “Fighting strength is just 5, garbage.” Let me think, it's also possible to do, “I have 530,000 battles.”

“Kukuku, I'm looking forward to it.” (Teacher)

“Teacher, bad voice.” (Fran)

“Ouou” (Urushi)

CHAPTER 73

ADVANCE

Fly was quite a bit more useful than I'd anticipated. We didn't really know anything about the second floor, but his abilities allowed us to advance through it as quickly as we had on the first. He even managed to find a treasure box along the way.

Our trek was going smoothly. We basically hadn't stopped since we broke through that one corridor with all the specters.

Seeing fly in action makes me want one of his species in my party. I wonder if leveling up ghost magic'll let me get my hands on something like him?

I decided to ask Jean about it, but he ended up cutting my hopes short. Apparently you needed all sorts of high quality magic tools and herbs to make it, so each specter would end up costing at least 10 million Gorudo. Actualizing it was a whole another matter, and that'd apparently take another 3 or so years in and of itself. To make matters worse, every single individual was different, and so not all of them would be able to use Shadow Clones the same way the one Jean summoned could.

In other words, you needed all three of money, time, and luck. Yeah, I guess that's not happening. I'll have to give up on the idea for now.

"Bored."

"Ahahaha! Do you not think it wonderful to be able to experience boredom as you journey through a dungeon?"

"Still bored."

Well, I guess that's pretty much something that's been due. I've been handling all the battles and stuff, so Fran's started to get frustrated out of sheer monotony.

"Well then..."

"Hm?"

"It appears as if Fly's found us a set of stairs."

[Already!?!]

“Already indeed. However, it seems as if the area is being secured by a guardian, an ogre zombie with a large horn sticking out its head. There are quite a few other zombies around it as well.”

“Really?”

Oh god damn it Fran, why is that your eyes started to sparkle the moment you heard that?

“Hahaha! How ever reliable you are!”

“Leave it to me.”

“Woof!”

“Hahahaha! Then why don’t we be on our way? Let us advance, for it has come time to exterminate the undead!” (TL Note: Lit. Exterminate Oni. Reference to Momotarou.)

Though, it looks like we’ve got a black cat, a sword and a wolf instead of a talking chicken, a monkey, and a dog, but whatever. Either way, it looks like we’re going to be getting something much better than a mere kibidango or two, so I’ll give it my all.

We grab the treasure chest and then head over to the corridor leading to the stairs, where we rendezvous with Fly, who was standing by with all his parts merged back into one.

According to Jean’s Undead Search, the corridor was filled with a large ogre zombie, twenty odd soldier type zombies, and about a hundred zombified dogs and rats.

[Alright, let’s charge in and then start by throwing a few AOE spells.]

“Understood.”

“Woof.”

Getting swarmed by all those mini zombies is probably going to be more of a pain in the ass than fighting the big one, so it’d be better for us to go with the Lv. 8 wind spell Gale Hazard. The spell isn’t too much of a hard hitter, but it compensates by covering a large area. It’s AOE is about 30 meters in either direction, so we should be able to cover the entire corridor if Fran and I both use it at the same time.

[I’ll leave all the soldier-types to you, Urushi.]

“Woof woof!”

“What about Jean?”

“I shall spend my time doing what I can against that ogre zombie over there. Serkan, Fly, wait here.”

“Va”

“...”

[Alright, let’s go.]

“Nn.”

It’s finally time for us to take on the floor boss!

[“——Gale Hazard”]

Violent Winds rage within the corridor and smash all of the smaller scaled magic beasts

“Arooo!”

Urushi pierces four different zombie soldiers with its dark spears.

“Hahahahahaha! How overwhelming you are!”

Jean gives a loud laugh as he completes his task with ease. He traps the ogre zombie inside of an Undead Jail and keeps it from moving.

[We’ll be leaving that big ass one to you then, Jean!]

“First, small fry.”

“Woof!”

We leap into the zombie horde.

The zombie soldiers are a bit troublesome to deal with. They’re far more agile and skillful than what you’d normally expect from zombies, and they’re able to counter attack for quite a bit of damage — not that it matters to us since we can get rid of them in a matter of moments.

Fran starts by cloaking her blade in flames and using her sword arts to chop their arms, and in doing so, completely negates their ability to counterattack. She then destroys their heads and splits their bodies in half. The damage from this combination instantly defeats them, she inflicts far too much damage for them to regenerate. Fire is especially effective against zombies because it naturally hinders their self restoration.

That said, she seems a bit dissatisfied that she wasn't able to use lightning, her favourite element. On the other hand, I'd say I'm pretty content. The flame cloaked blade reminds me of Gundams and their beam sabers.

Urushi was fighting in a much flashier fashion. He was using a mix of fang and magic to completely grind the zombies to dust. His fur's starting to get dirty though, so I'm going to have to give him a wash later.

Things were going pretty smoothly for me too. All I have to do is use magic perception to find their magic stones and pierce right through them in one go.

The hallway is kind of reminiscent of what we ran into on the first floor. Spirits keep gushing out of the corpses and end up all over the room. Heh, what good experience points they are.

The spirits stopped spawning after we beat all the grunts though, so before long, we were left with nothing but the ogre zombie.

[Orya!]

"Woof!"

And even that was killed instantly. Jean made it stop moving, so I easily pierced through its magic stone by launching myself with telekinetic catapult.

<Self Evolution has activated. 50 evolution points received.>

Finally! It finally happened!! I mean, I knew we came here so I could absorb magic stones, but I've already gotten at least 300 worth!

Name: Master

Wielder: Fran

Race: Intelligent Weapon

Attack: 524 Mana: 3000 Durability: 2800

Magical Conductivity: A+

Skills

Appraisal: Lv 7

Appraisal Block

Shape Shifting

High Speed Regeneration

Self Evolution: Rank 10 | Magic Stone Value 4511/5500 | Memory 89 | Points 51

Self Modification (Superior)

Telekenesis

Low Telekenesis Up

Intermediate Wielder Status Up

Low Wielder Recovery Up

Low Mana Up

Intermediate Memory Up

Knowledge of Magic Beasts

Skill Sharing

Sorcerer

Unique Skills

Principle of Falsehood: Lv 5

Superior Skills

Sword Technique: SP

Oh hell yeah! I can start leveling stuff up again! Alrighty, what should I level up this time? Or wait, maybe I should hold my points till we're out of the dungeon first.

It even looks like my magical conductivity risen! Hell yeah! I'm one step closer towards the peak! I even got a new skill too.

Shape Shifting: Change into whatever shape is desired through the consumption of

magical energy.

Does this mean I can change into other types of weapons? I guess I should give it a try whenever the situation happens to call for it.

That said, it seems like we're having a pretty easy time right now. The dungeon's interior is much easier to get through than the exterior was. I wonder if I'm just overthinking things...

CHAPTER 74

TO THE DEPTHS!

We continued to fight zombies and skeletons as we made our through the dungeon's third floor. The traps were getting more dangerous, but Serkan's abilities let us breeze right through them.

We've managed to progress at a pretty good pace without tiring ourselves out.

All that's left is for us is to find the Spirit Eater Jean was looking for. If things go well, we might even be able to conquer the dungeon while we're at it.

[So what kind of magic beast is this Spirit Eater thing anyways? What's it look like?]

"Hahahaha! I have absolutely no idea."

[Wait, aren't we supposed to be capturing it? You should have some sort of idea at least...]

"Its appearance used to match that of your average zombie, but the consumption of its peers has led to its evolution. It had become a giant the last time I laid eyes on it, and I believe it has likely evolved even further. I can no longer fathom its form."

[Where'd you last see it?]

"My last sighting of it was just outside the dungeon's entrance. It was a member of what I believe to be a squad the dungeon master called upon to drive me away."

"Couldn't beat them?"

"Indeed. It is regrettable, but I have to admit that not even my experience in necromancy was enough allow me to forge a plan that would lead to my victory. All of the schemes I'd conjured had led only to the Spirit Eater throwing me down its hatch."

[Sounds like quite the opponent.]

"Yes, but that is precisely why I would not mind if we are unable to succeed in its capture. We have no idea as to its whereabouts, and I only desired for it because I wished to use its powers to conquer the dungeon. I've no need for it with companions like yourselves by my side."

[So we don't have to go looking for it?]

"That is correct."

And with that, we continued to advance through the dungeon, our sights set on only its deepest depths.

It took us two days to traverse its top eight floors. By the time we got to the ninth, we'd already ran into some rank D monsters like Hellhounds, Zombie Nagas, Skeletons and Dark Paladins.

Jean's support was quintessential. We honestly probably wouldn't have made it this far without him. His ability to make purify and take control of the undead within a dungeon composed solely thereof allowed him to act like something along the lines of a Joker in a game of cards.

The items he brought along were super useful too.

His skull shaped lamp turned out to be something incredible. It could create safe zones that warded off the undead so long as we stayed inside of them. Thanks to that, we were able to get ourselves a good night's rest despite the fact that we were in the middle of a dungeon. Though, I did feel a bit revolted by the fact that zombies would end up circling the safe zone while making the ever so anticipated "ahhhh" sounds. I couldn't help but feel a sense of awe and respect for both Fran and Jean, as both were able to get right to sleep despite the zombies.

That said, it was pretty obvious that Jean was still much more comfortable with our conditions than Fran was. Jean would put up a safe zone whenever we stopped to eat, and naturally, zombies would end up circle us just like they did when we went to bed. Fran would end up making a bit of a disgusted face as a result, but Jean was able to keep eating as if nothing was wrong at all.

I knew he was a necromancer and figured that he was probably used to stuff like this, but honestly, I was still a bit shocked. I mean, those are zombies, you know? They're literally walking, rotting corpses. Some of them even look like they're falling apart at

the seams.

On a side note, I tried shapeshifting a few times as we fought our way down into the dungeon's depths.

I was able to transform into an axe, a spear, and even a dagger, not that any of those forms ended up being of much use. There were quite a few problems with the skill. First and foremost was that it continued to consume an incredible amount of mana so long as I remained transformed. There was also the fact that we didn't point any other weapon's arts. The most annoying part of it all was that my mass had to stay constant, so I couldn't even turn into any sort of larger weapon either.

I'm sure that there's gotta be some other way to use the skill, but it's going to have to sit on the backburner for now.

[Looks like we've reached the ninth floor's boss room.]

The dungeon's been set up so that each floor is a labyrinth of sorts. The only thing about that's really stayed constant is the fact that every floor's ended with a large room with a boss in it.

It's marked by the same kind of door every time too, so I know for sure that the room we're about to enter right now is the boss' room.

The bosses we've fought thus far are as follows: an ogre zombie, a skeleton tiger, a dragonoid zombie, a naga skeleton, an orhrus zombie, a chimera skeleton, and an elder zombie (Great Superior Rank). Each boss was stronger than the last, and the elder skeleton we fought on the eighth floor was even equipped with a magic spear. It knew how to use divine spear arts and divine spear techniques, so it made for an extremely difficult foe.

It even managed to drop Fran's HP below the halfway point. Though, on the bright side, defeating it allowed us to gain access to both Divine Spear Arts and Divine Spear Techniques. I wonder if that means my spear form might end up seeing some use after

all.

“Now, why don’t we go ahead and open the door?”

“Nn.”

The room was filled with naught but a single skeleton. What kind of foe will it be, I wonder...

[Flare Blast!]

“Hexagonal Tornado!”

“Hell Blaze!”

“Arooo!”

We start with our usual strategy. All four of us simultaneously bombard the skeleton with magic.

“It is still capable of movement!”

That’s a bit of an understatement. In fact, it doesn’t feel like we’ve done any damage to it whatsoever.

Race: Legendary Fighter Skeleton, Undead, Magic Beast

Lv. 24

State: Guardian

HP: 1568/1663

MP: 988

STR: 647

VIT: 713

AGI: 436

INT: 289

MGC: 521

DEX: 550

Skills

Appraisal Jamming: Lv 6

Sword Arts: Lv Max

Divine Sword Arts: Lv 1

Sword Techniques: Lv Max

Divine Sword Techniques: Lv 1

Regeneration: Lv 8

Autocast Lv 6

Resistance to Abnormal Status Lv 9

Spirit Control: Lv 4

Ghost Magic: Lv 8

Resistance to Mental Abnormalities: Lv 9

Elemental Blade: Lv 6

Poison Magic: Lv 6

Magic Resist: Lv 9

Dark Magic: Lv 4

Vigour Manipulation

Extra Skills

Latent Potential Release

Titles

Dungeon Guardian

Equipment

Magic Sword: Deathgaze

Full Orihalcum Plate Armour

Aidoneus' Mantle

The skeleton begins to rise. I feel a sense of urgency overcome me as its crimson bones rattle within its golden armour. The sheer amount of magical energy emanating from its body tells me that its threat level is no lower than B.

It's a monster on par with the demon we slew. Its status reveals that it's got far fewer tactics at hand; its skills were instead focused on enhancing its defensive prowess.

It was in possession of Lv 8 regeneration, Lv 9 resistance to abnormal status, Lv 9

resistance to mental abnormalities, and Lv 9 magic resist. On top of that, it even wore orihalcum armour, a type of armour that focused on boosting its magic resist even further. All those resistances meant that attacking it with spells simply wasn't going to get us anywhere.

[Jean, pull back.]

"Of course. It appears that I've got quite the poor matchup against this here skeleton. I will focus on Healing."

[Urushi, your job will be to protect Jean. Make sure you keep an eye out too, just in case any other undead show up.]

"Woof!"

The skeleton would end up facing off against Fran.

"Master."

[Sure thing.]

Fran puts the phantom sword she was using back into her dimensional storage. She could tell at a glance that she wouldn't be able to beat the legendary skeleton lest she gave it her all.

She grabs ahold of me and takes up a stance, a situation that makes me feel much more natural.

"Nn. Much more natural with Master."

[Hahahaha!]

"Nn?"

[Nothing, don't mind it. There's no way we can lose if the two of us work together, right?]

"Of course."

[Alright! This'll be the first hard fight we've had in awhile. Let's do this!]

"Nn!"

TL Note: Divine (Weapon) Arts/Techniques are not necessarily of the holy element. It simply means something along the lines of "Sword Saint," but "Spear Saint" sounds awkward, so I've decided to standardize them as Divine Arts. Please let me know if you believe this to be an issue and if you have any suggestions for improvement.

TL Note 2: I've been using the word Spirit. It's important to note that these refer specifically to spirits of the dead as opposed to a race of spiritual beings. I've attempted to imply this through the connotations. Please let me know if there's anything better for me to change this to going forward.

CHAPTER 75

OVERWHELMING POWER

A violent ringing filled the room as Fran and the skeleton exchanged blows. Blade against blade, the two continued to clash.

The battle was rather simple and barebones, but if anyone were to have watched it, they undoubtedly would have ended up staring in wonderment, for the duel almost seemed to be one of an inhuman caliber.

From a pure numerical standpoint, Fran was at an overwhelming disadvantage. Her stats were much lower, and the two were about equally proficient in swordplay. Luckily, I was able to bring her up to par by raising her abilities with my skills and spells.

And so, we were stuck at a stalemate.

The most annoying part of it all was that the skeleton was capable of appraisal jamming. I wasn't able to figure out where its magic stone was, so I had to guess. Thanks to that, I wasn't able to catch it off guard with a sudden telekinetic catapult. Though, I guess I did always have the option of just using it over and over again until I hit the right spot.

[It's healing again!]

"Haa!"

"Kakaka! (Skeleton noises)"

Another aspect that brought us trouble was the Skeleton's Dungeon Guardian title, as it provided rapid recovery to both its HP and MP so long as it remained within the dungeon.

Seriously? God damn, dealing with something with the ability to regenerate *this* much is a huge pain in the ass... On second thought, telekinetic catapult might not be the best idea, as using it would revealing it, which in turn could potentially allow the skeleton to react to it when we need it the most. Our only choice was to slowly and steadily whittle him down.

Another thing that gave us trouble was that one autocast skill it had. The skill did exactly what its name implied, and continued to bombard us with magical projectiles. And since it was automatic, it would continue to function regardless of what the skeleton itself was doing. It would often end up getting in our way the moment we got it into any sort of favourable position. The spells it fires off are pretty powerful too, so our HP tends to take a nosedive every time we get hit.

We were able to fight back by putting points into magical barriers. Through their use, we managed to not only nullify the spells automatically cast by the skeleton, but also some of its other attacks as well, a welcome miscalculation.

The tradeoff was that a decent chunk my precious self evolution points ended up getting used up in the process.

“Haaaa!”

“Kakakaka!”

Ring!

The duel continued for over ten minutes.

Ring ring!

The sound made by the clash of steel on steel was occasionally drowned out by the ringing of a glass bell. Each ring was accompanied by an activation of the Black Cat Armour set's instant death prevention passive. In other words, the skeleton's magic sword, Deathgaze, must've had some sort of instant kill ability, but it was negated through and through.

Thank you Gallus! I'll definitely treat you to a good drink or two once we meet up in Ulmut!

Even with the anti-instant-kill passive, Fran was still at a disadvantage. The enemy we were facing off against was a member of an undead, a walking corpse that knew not of fatigue or exhaustion. Fran, on the other hand, would suffer from its effects. The longer we fought, the bigger a toll would be taken on both her body and mind. That said, the ten odd minutes this exchange had lasted had not been spent in vain.

[It's magic stone is probably somewhere in its head.]

"Nn!"

I'd left all the fighting to Fran whilst instead spending my time observing the skeleton and searching for its magic stone.

Since it had no sense of pain and could regenerate rapidly, the skeleton straight up tanked most of our attacks. The only exception was when we targeted its head; it would always defend against anything aimed towards its cranium.

[Looks like it's invulnerabilities ended up giving us a hand!]

"Haaa!"

"Kakakakakakakaka!"

That said, it wasn't going to just let us attack its sole vital point.

Our knowledge of that point, however, caused the battle's intensity to suddenly rise to a whole new level. Fran focused the entirety of her assault on the skeleton's head while the skeleton defended against her attacks and concentrated on countering them.

"Ha!"

"Kaka!"

“There!”

“Kakkaka!”

The skeleton focused every last bit of its attention on Fran’s attacks, a fatal mistake.

[Urushi!]

“Woof!”

“Ka!?”

Urushi hadn’t been able to provide much support due to how quickly and erratically the two melee fighters had been moving about, so instead of focusing on long ranged bombardment, he ended up sneaking into Fran’s shadow. There, he waited until the most opportune moment: now.

He extended his head out from within the shadows and grabbed ahold of the skeleton’s leg.

“Master! Now!”

[Here we go!]

I finally reveal my trump card and launch myself with a telekinetic catapult from point blank range.

[Oryaaaa!]

It didn’t matter how strong it was or how fast it reacted. The skeleton wouldn’t be able to dodge the attack; it was done for — or at least it should’ve been.

“Kakakaaaa!”

Shiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiine!

“Kya!”

“Whimper.”

[Wha-!]

Light erupted from the skeleton’s body and blew us back just as we were about to emerge victorious. What a tremendous amount of magical energy!

I quickly scanned our surroundings in order to figure out exactly what was going on; the skeleton was already on the move.

“Kakakakakakakaka!”

“Ua!”

[Fran!]

The skeleton moved so quickly that it almost seemed to vanish on the spot. Before I knew it, it’d already ran up to Fran, who had yet to recover from the last attack she received. She quickly drew her phantom blade, but the skeleton knocked it out of her hands with but a single strike.

I quickly started moving towards her right as the skeleton began to swing it’s blade once more. The weapon moved with an incredible speed. I didn’t know if I could make it in time.

[Uraaaaaaa!!!]

The sound of steel on steel echoed throughout the room yet again

I managed to force my way between them at the very last moment. I didn’t have enough power to fully deflect the blow, and I was sent flying yet again. Luckily though, I was able to buy Fran enough time to get back up.

[You still okay?]

“Nn!”

The skeleton continues to attack, but Fran manages to grab ahold of me and defend.

“Kaka! Kakaka!”

“Kuh!”

“Ka!”

“Ua!”

[Middle Heal!]

God damn! Fran’s started to get pushed back. She’s been taking more damage than I can heal, and all that damage has been piling up. All the magical barriers I have to keep casting have also taken their toll on my mana. Why did this god damn skeleton suddenly power up so much!?

Appraisal!

Race: Legendary Fighter Skeleton, Undead, Magic Beast

Lv. 24

State: Guardian, Latent Potential Unlocked

HP: 1229/1663

MP: 988

STR: 647→1137

VIT: 713→1213

AGI: 436→936

INT: 289→789

MGC:521→1021

DEX:550→1050

What the shit!? All it stats rose by 500? Seriously? It’s strength, vitality, magic power and dexterity are all over a thousand too. What the hell! Talk about overpowered

bullshit!

Its current state says that it has its latent potential unlocked too. That's probably because of that Latent Potential Release skill it's got. Let's take a look.

Latent Potential Release: Unlocks the user's latent potential. Gains stats based on how much room the user has to grow. Since it pushes the user to its limits, this skill will drain the user's life force throughout its activation. The user is also required to provide some sort of compensation. Compensation will vary from user to user.

Now that I take a second look, I realize that the skeleton's HP is plummeting at an incredible rate. That's nice and all, but with the way things are going, Fran will probably collapse before the skeleton actually manages to use its remaining hp.

"Kakaka!"

"Ugh!"

Shit! Why the hell is it so strong! I have to use Telekenesis every time it attacks just to stop myself from flying out of Fran's hands.

"Woof!"

"Kaka!"

"Whimper!"

It's reaction speed seems to have risen as well. Urushi was cut down the moment he emerged from Fran's shadow and attempted to attack.

[Urushi, fall back!]

"W-Woof."

Urushi musters up whatever strength he can and dives back into Fran's shadow. Thankfully, the skeleton's attacks aren't able to follow it there.

“Reverse Undead!”

Jean’s voice rings throughout the room right as the skeleton’s blade passes through where Urushi had been just a moment before. The spell he cast was one with a powerful effect; it could completely obliterate undead creatures. It should be even capable of turning high tier undead into nothing but dust.

But it failed.

“Curses, it is as I feared. My magic has no effect.”

“Haaa!”

“Kakakakakakaka!”

Fran and the skeleton continued to exchange blows, but her HP was still dropping much faster than the undead’s. It was gradually but steadily driving us into a corner.

CHAPTER 76

ON THE EDGE

The Legendary Skeleton had become overwhelmingly powerful after releasing its latent potential.

It delivered strike after strike, each with all the power and technique of a master swordsman. Its movements were so fast that it was near impossible to keep track of. Even the spells it automatically fired off from time to time had been powered up. Not even my max leveled magic barriers could stop them anymore.

Urushi had already long been defeated, and Jean's magic simply didn't work on it. It was just far too powerful.

"Ha!"

"Ka!"

Fran's being pressured to the point where she can no longer do anything but defend. Her HP continued to drop as the skeleton attacked with a storm-like assault. It's goal was obviously to end her before it exhausted all its strength.

Fran managed to dodge each fatal strike by the only the slightest bit. The situation didn't look good for her, but, she didn't give up. Her eyes almost seemed to glimmer as she searched for an opportunity to take back the momentum.

[You should probably use Skill Taker.]

"Nn!"

To be honest, I wanted to save it a bit more so we could use it on whatever bosses lay in wait for us after this one, but, it didn't seem like we really had any other choice. Using it now isn't all that detrimental though, seeing as how Fran and I can both use

the skill once each. Besides, we've got a trump card up our sleeves anyways.

That said, I didn't even really know whether or not skill taker would work. I even had to muddle over which skill to steal. Latent Potential Release might not deactivate even if we steal it, but stealing a different skill would allow him to keep his current stats regardless, so I didn't have much of a choice but to at least give it a shot.

[Use it now!]

"Ha!"

"Ka?"

Fran activates Skill Taker and targets the skeleton's Latent Potential Release. Hopefully this'll drop its stats back down to what they normally are....

<Skill Taker's current target cannot be stolen. Process Failed.>

Wait, what the hell!?

Skill Taker's effect is as follows: Skill Taker: Lv Max. Steals rarity level 10 and below skills with a success rate of 100%. Can be used once per target. Cooldown: 18 days. Range: Skill level * 1 meter.

We're still in the midst of a melee, so there's no way the skeleton's out of range. Latent Potential Release doesn't have a level either, so that shouldn't be the issue, which means that the skill's rarity has to be at least 11. Shit, seriously!? Or wait, is it because it's classified as an extra skill? Is it possible that we can't steal those?

"Kakkaka!"

"Ku... The skill...?"

[It failed!]

"Again."

Fran tries to use the skill again.

“...Can’t!”

But she wasn’t able to. It seemed that failing to take a skill also consumed one of the skill’s usages. Fran won’t be able to use skill taker for another 18 days!

I could always try using mine...but it’d probably be better to change up our strategy a little. It was time for me to pull out my trump card!

[Fran, I’m going to do *that*]

“Nn!”

I start putting points into the Divine Sword Art skill and raised it all the way to Lv 5 in one go. It was a trick was one that Fran and I thought up whilst journeying through the dungeon. Its purpose was to catch the enemy off guard, and to that end, we purposefully left it at Lv 5 instead of pointing it all the way. That way, we’d be able to use the exact same trick in the future as well.

“Kaka?”

“Ha!”

“Ka-Kaka!?”

Fran’s movements undergo a visible change as her knowledge of blade deepens. Every step she takes, every motion she executes becomes much more precise. Just a moment prior, the two were swordsmen on par with each other. But, Fran had easily surpassed the skeleton in a matter of moments.

Based on what we’ve experienced, a three skill level difference would lead to an gap in strength too wide to be crossed. The reason we chose to boost the skill’s level by four was to make up for the difference in stats. That said, the skeleton still had the advantage. It felt no fatigue, and its body was effectively immortal.

However, the sudden change in Fran's abilities threw it off and momentarily dulled its movements.

And thus, we were given one last chance.

"Haaaa!!!"

Fran activated Impact Slash, a Lv 1 divine sword technique. Though the skill had a bit of a recovery delay after it, it was still an impressive one, a full forced right to left horizontal cut packed with nothing but pure power. The two of us worked together to combine her Magical Convergence and my Sorcery so that we could cloak the strike with a Wind Blade Overboost. The attack was truly one with every last fibre of our beings behind it; it was several times more powerful than anything else we'd ever done in the past.

But even so, the skeleton still managed to deflect it. What monstrous strength!

Its arms were fast. At this rate, it'd be able to get a hit in before us. We'd be in trouble.

Or at least that's how things would've been.

[We weren't thinking of finishing you off with just that one hit either!]

"Nn."

[Sorry about this, Fran.]

"Doesn't matter."

Impact Slash would normally end with an opening because the user would have to twist their hips a full ninety degrees whilst delivering the swing.

But I forced the skill to end a bit earlier than usual by stockpiling and then suddenly releasing a bunch of telekinetic force. This allowed us to cancel the technique's post-cast delay, at the cost of sending all the force and shock right back up Fran's arms.

And the result?

A series of loud cracks resounded throughout the boss room.

Fran's arms broke, and her muscle fibres were torn to shreds. The noises that accompanied the event made me feel discomfort, and the thought it was my own fault even more so.

But even despite Fran's current condition, we still needed to deliver the finishing blow.

[Frannn!]

“Urahhh!”

Though her arms were screaming in agony, Fran managed to activate Snake Slash, a Lv 1 sword art. Though I could hear her arms breaking as she thrust the blade, I boosted the attack's speed with telekinesis. We couldn't afford to hold anything back, even the slightest bit.

Impact slash had thrown the skeleton off completely, it had yet to right its stance.

“Aaaaahhhh!”

“Kakka!”

The hell!? Even though we'd managed to completely mess up the skeleton's posture, it was still able to react in time by tilting its head backwards. Shit! I'm not going to make it!

Damn it, what do I do? Is there any way for me to.... Wait! Yes! I know exactly what to do!

[Here we gooooo! Shapeshift!!]

I thin my blade in order to elongate it by approximately 20cm. My form becomes less like that of a longsword and warps into something akin to a long estoc. The process cost me a whole 200 mana, but it was well worth it. I'm really grateful I managed to get my hands on this skill!

“Ka!!”

The skeleton's completely run out of options. I flew straight through it's skull and split it's magic stone in two.

“Ka... Ka”

The legendary skeleton finally stops moving.

“Kakakakakaaa”

And then, it laughed. It laughed an ominous, unsettling cackle as its body collapsed underneath itself. The crimson skeleton crumbled into not but a pile of bone, as if all its prior actions had been nothing more than an illusion.

But even then, it still gave off a ghostly impression, as if it could rise up again at any given moment. As expected of a B level threat.



“Ugh....”

[Alright, I’ll fix you right now, Fran. Greater Heal!]

“Are you all alright?”

“Woof woof!”

It was a tough battle, but, winning it paid off. the skeleton’s magic stone was worth over three hundred magic stone points, and I managed to get ahold of it’s appraisal jamming, spirit control, and magic resist, amongst many other useful skills.

We should be able to save Latent Potential Release for whenever we need a trump card.

The skill’s effect is supposed to change based on the user, so I’m kind of curious how much it’ll have an effect on Fran and I. I wish we could test it right now, but it costs HP, has a few other requirements and even has a 24 hour cooldown, so I’ll have to just hang on to it for now.

“I’m...fine.”

[Are you sure? Does it hurt anywhere?]

“Nn. Fine.”

“Woof woof?”

Urushi licks Fran’s arms. He also seems to be concerned about her as well.

“Thanks.”

“Woof!”

Jean went to go retrieve the skeleton’s bones.

[Can you use those for anything?]

“These bones hold great value for use as a catalyst in the practice of necromancy. They alone more than make up for every last bit of this expedition’s cost. Hahahaha! I thank

you greatly.”

[I guess that means you can use potions and the like as freely as you want now.]

“Whatever did you plan to do with the skeleton’s equipment?”

[I don’t know. Didn’t think about it yet.]

“I’ve no need for its sword or cloak, so I shall pass these two items to you. That said, I would very much like to keep ahold of the armour, orihalcum is a material that mages like myself find to be quite useful after all.”

[Sounds good to me. You sure though?]

Jean was the one who made the request for us to come along in the first place. I wouldn’t have minded even if he decided to take all the loot for himself. I was quite grateful that he was willing to split it with us though.

CHAPTER 77

THE PHANTOM KING

Thirty minutes had passed since we defeated the Legendary Skeleton, but we were still sitting around in its room. Fran and Jean were restoring their MP through potions, but I was stuck waiting for mine to naturally regenerate.

I was still far from ready to explore despite the fact that we'd already rested up quite a decent bit. My durability was at half, and I had less than 500 MP remaining.

Fran's armour had almost been completely torn to shreds, so Jean summoned a skeleton to repair it. He was so prepared for any given situation that he even had the necessary magic crystal on hand.

I decided to use this time to inspect a few of the skills I gained throughout the dungeon's exploration.

The ones I looked at first were the ones I got from the Legendary Skeleton. Specifically, I focused on Appraisal Jamming and Autocast before looking into three of the skills I got from other parts of the dungeon, namely, Mana Emission, Physical Barrier, Herculean Strength. All five of these skills were currently Lv 1.

The first skill I tried to use was naturally Appraisal Jamming. And as I expected, the skill's functions seemed relatively limited because it was still stuck at Lv 1. Like other informatic-type skills, it wouldn't be able to prove itself useful unless I pointed it.

The spells Autocast were pretty weak too. A kid could do the same amount of damage if they just chucked a pebble at something. Yeah, I don't really know what I expected from a Lv 1 skill.

Mana emission did exactly what it said it did, and allowed me to emit magical energy. I could use it for both offense and defense by either firing it off like I would a bullet or

spreading it around me like I would a barrier. It was a great skill, but again, it wasn't really able to do all that much at Lv 1.

Physical Barrier was pretty much the same as one of the skills I already had, Magical Barrier. The only difference was that the former had better defense against physical attacks, whereas the latter had better defense against magic.

The Herculean Strength skill was an active buff. It would temporarily increase the user's strength upon use. I'm not really sure what to feel about the numbers though, they seemed kind of pathetic. The Lv 1 version would only raise the stat by 2 for 10 minutes, but I am kind of curious as to what would happen if I pointed it.

Honestly speaking, none of the skills I gained would really help us much in a fight, Latent Potential Release aside, that is.

I didn't mind though. All the skirmishes and boss battles we've experienced throughout the dungeon have allowed Fran and Urushi to level up 10 and 15 times respectively. Those level ups alone have more than increased our combat prowess by more than enough.

"Nom nom."

"Chomp Chomp."

"Splendid, another meal as delectable as could be."

Fran, Urushi and Jean ate as we rested. The three were all greedily shoving pieces of my special fried chicken down their throats, though I guess it'd be called fried monster instead, seeing as how it was made out of meat harvested from a variety of magic beasts instead of well, you know, chicken. It seemed that fried foods were exceptionally difficult to come by, and now that I think about it, I can't seem to recall ever seeing anyone ever bread anything before frying it – though I have seen people dumping food in piping hot oil before. The fried foods I made were apparently so uncommon that they even caught Jean by surprise.

Urushi was especially overjoyed. He got way more than usual because both Fran and

Jean continued to pass him bones as they finished with their meat.

“Hmm... it appears as if Fly’s discovered another door. Hahahaha! And this time, he’s found the dungeon core behind it!”

“Boss?”

“Allow me just a moment to answer that question for you.”

Jean pauses.

“...”

[What’s wrong?]

“I’ve lost Fly’s signal.”

“Killed?”

“It appears so, but he’s already informed me of the path we should follow. And so, I shall take the lead.”

The monsters on the dungeon’s tenth floor were pretty much exactly the same as the ones on the ninth, but we had an easier time dealing with them. We knew that we were about to finish the dungeon, so we started pushing forward with renewed vigour whilst also using our items more generously.

“Behold, companions of mine! That door right there is what marks the boss’ room.”

We finally managed to reach the dungeon’s last boss after three entire days worth of exploration.

I absorbed quite a few magic stones during all the skirmishing we did on our way here, so I managed to recover almost all my durability alongside 2000 or so MP.

Fran’s movements have gone up a notch as well. The fight with the Legendary Skeleton had provided her with quite a bit of combat experience.

But despite our improvements, we continued to keep our guards up.

“Boss?”

“Fly was not able to provide us any information, but there is simply no way the room would be left unguarded.”

[The dungeon master’s probably in the core room as well.]

The dungeon master might turn out to be something pretty powerful given the scale of the dungeon he’s managed to create. He’s even able to order B ranked magic beasts around, so we know for sure that he can’t just be some random pushover.

“I require some time to prepare.”

[Prepare what?]

“Wahahahahaha! I’m glad you asked. The answer is of course, my trump card. Its incurs quite the cost, so I wished to avoid its application whenever possible. However, the current state of affairs calls for me to prepare for the worst.”

Jean was right. We needed to do everything in our power to ready ourselves for the battle ahead...except I didn’t know what or how to prepare.

“Raise skills?”

[That’s one thing I was considering...]

I still had 25 self evolution points remaining, but I had to make sure I used them wisely.

[I think it’d be better for me to save them for now so I can point whatever we end up needing to beat the boss.]

The floor boss had to be at least a threat level B, and we didn’t have the slightest clue as to what we were up against. Pointing stuff right now might end up screwing us over instead of doing us any good.

“Fran, Master, I would like to request that you retrieve a few of the items I left within your dimensional storages.”

[Which ones?]

“The first I would like to retrieve would be the pendant.”

The pendant? Oh yeah, there was something like that wasn't there?

“This?”

“Precisely. I'd like to you wear it.”

What the hell? Whoever made that thing has to have some issues, I swear. There's an incredibly realistic zombie face plastered onto the pendant.

“That pendant functions to protect the user in the case they take a fatal blow.”

[Seriously?]

It totally looks like the type of item you'd use to curse someone or summon a zombie or something like that.

“Hahaha! Your doubts are well placed. I made the same mistake in the past, and only purchased the item because I'd assumed it would have some use in necromancy.”

[Well, yeah. I mean it's literally a zombie head on a pendant.]

“It's effect is quite incredible regardless though, is it not?”

The pendant would stop the user from dying once whilst restoring both their HP and MP back up to half. The latter half of the effect was impressive, and evidenced that the pendant was a pretty expensive item. Other, similar items would often just leave the user with a single point of HP.

[Well, if you're sure you don't mind, we gratefully accept.]

“No problem. That aside, I would also like you to retrieve several other items as well.”

“Which?”

“Most of the amulets. I would prefer that you wear them as well, in fact.”

Fran ended up getting about 10 different magical amulets. I couldn't really feel much magical energy emanating from them, but they were still pretty nice to have for the sake of peace of mind.

“And with that out of the way, I too must prepare myself for battle.”

We bring out a bunch of different tools and medicines as per Jean's request.

One of the items he picked was a large, rectangular box. Inside of it was a sinister looking, spine shaped staff topped off by a skull. It suited Jean pretty well because of how ominous he looked, and really amplified that necromancer vibe he had going for him.

I quickly swept over the staff and appraised it.

Name: Unknown

Huh, doesn't seem like I can appraise it.

“Hahahahaha! This staff is a bit special. You will require more than a merely the appraisal skill to see its worth.”

“Why?”

“Its name is Aidoneus' Blessing, a named item I happened to procure in a dungeon during one of my adventures.”

It seemed that the staff's stats were so high that I'd need some sort of upgraded or special appraisal skill to be able to see through it.

[It's ability is t-]

“Kukakakakakakaka!”

[Wha-!!]

“Nn?”

“Woof?”

What was that? It sounded like a human laugh, and at first I thought it came from the staff, but Jean seemed surprised as well, so that can't be right.

“Kukakakaka!”

The laugh was strangely irritating too. Just hearing it was enough to annoy me.

I quickly began scanning the room for the voice's source.

And that was when the situation took a sudden turn for the worse.

A loud “shing” resounded through the corridor, accompanied by a bright, glowing light.

[A magic circle?!]

My crisis sense started to go off as a magic circle appeared within the hallway.

Shit!

[Fran, Urushi!]

Fuck, it doesn't look like we're going to be able to avoid it.

The magic circle began to expand. It only took a few seconds for it to grow to the point where it filled the entire corridor with blinding light.

“You’ve kept me waiting for far too long. If you won’t come, then I’ll just bring you right to me! Kukakakakaka!”

Our surroundings had completely changed by the time the light had disappeared. We were now standing within a large room, several times larger than any other we’ve come across in the dungeon thus far. But despite that, all our gazes were focused but on a single target.

Or rather, we had no choice but to direct our attention straight ahead. We simply didn’t have the liberty to pick any other option.

“Kuakakaka! Welcome, intruders of mine.”

The figure that stood before us was emanating an overwhelming amount of magical energy. His very existence seemed to lay ridiculous pressure upon us, but most importantly, he was implausibly revolting to gaze upon.

His threat level was estimated to be a B, but I simply couldn’t see him as something that stood shoulder to shoulder with the Legendary Skeleton we defeated earlier. He was so powerful that I probably would’ve shat myself if I wasn’t a sword.

The colour drained from Fran’s face as she tightened her grip on my handle. She was able to stand up to a demon without so much as even flinching, but the being before us was so intimidating that she had started to tremble in fear.

[Don’t worry, Fran.]

Seeing Fran like that calmed me down in an instant. Why the hell was I getting all panicked? I couldn’t let myself get carried away, I still had to protect her. For the time being, I decided to consider our escape options. We could still use the Warp Feather if it really came down to it.

[We’re going to be making a break for it, Fran.]

(Understood.)

[Jean, let's get the hell out of here.]

"Hold that thought for just a moment."

Fran had already grabbed ahold of Jean's arm, and I had already readied the Warp Feather. There wasn't any way in hell we'd be able to fight the monster standing before us.

But.

[The hell!?!]

The Warp Feather refused to activate. I didn't know what happened, nor did I know what to say. I should've had more than enough magical power.

"Kukakaka! Unfortunately for you, this room was designed to prevent escape through teleportation. You have no choice but to fight me to the death! Kukakaka! Kukakakakakakaka!"

The monster, the lich standing before us laughed joyously as he announced a cruel declaration.



CHAPTER 78

Vs LICH

As the light faded away, it left behind it nothing but a single undead creature. The sheer amount of magical energy that emanated from its body made me feel as if I was getting goosebumps. What stood before us was the most powerful undead known to man. A lich.

Basic Information

Name: Lich

Undead

Magic Beast

Dungeon Master

Lv 23

Stats

HP: 863

MP: 2467

STR: 134

VIT: 337

AGI: 366

INT: 1009

MGC: 1098

DEX: 366

Skills

Encantation Shortening: Lv 7

Dread: Lv 4

Fear: Lv 4

Regeneration: Lv 6

Spirit Control: Lv Max

Ghost Magic: Lv Max

Hell Magic: Lv 4

Vengeful Spirit

Magic Manipulation

Equipment

Tattered Robe

The Lich species was one whose name was spread far and wide, and for good reason. They were far more powerful than any other species of undead.

Looking at its stats confused me a bit though. Is that really all it's got? It'd seemed so intimidating and had so much pressure that I'd almost wanted to classify it as an A ranked threat. I mean, I know that every lich is going to be a bit different, but this guy here, his status seems to show that he's only a B ranked threat at best.

"Overload: Summon Undead"

The lich started summoning undead before we were able to fully recover from the shock of being unable to port out.

"Why don't you face off against these first? Kukakaka! Don't die too easily now."

"OooooooooOooooOooOOOOooo..."

"Ahhhhhhh..."

"Graaoooooooo..."

The lich simultaneously summoned 10 powerful undead creatures. Even the weakest amongst them was ranked C; half were strong enough to be classified as B level threats. They were just as powerful as the legendary skeleton we had just struggled to defeat just a bit earlier in the day.

[Fran]

"Nn. Ready to go all out."

We focused our magical energies as we readied ourselves for a battle to the death. We would have to thin out their numbers with magic whilst hoping for an opening with which we could attack the lich.

Or at least that's what I'd planned before I noticed Jean stepping up in front of us.

"Leave this to me."

[You sure...?]

"Absolutely. I shall not fall to the likes of mere pawns so long as I have my staff."

Jean's face was plastered with his usual, brazen smile, but I couldn't help but feel as if he seemed a bit more grim and resolute than usual.

"Hahahaha! Behold, my trump card!"

Jean rises to face the incoming undead head on.

"Aidoneus' Blessing, commence activation!"

The skull atop the staff almost seems to react to his words; its jaw dropped open with a click, and its eyes seemed to gain a sort of dubious lustre.

"0000000000oooooooo000000000000000oooooooo000000o00oooo"

[The hell?!]

"Nn?"

"Woof..."

A sort of half-hymn half-moan emerges from within the skull. It was hard to describe; it sounded mysterious, creepy, and a bit like a grudgeful prayer all at the same time.

It was quite a strange thing to hear.

"00000ooooo00oooo"

"Aidoneus' Blessing, grant peace to those unable to achieve salvation. Sing them a

melody of love, hate, and resentment!"

A blueish-white light flowed out from within the staff.

"Escape, companions! Escape the light!"

The undead attempted to follow the lich's orders, but there wasn't any way for them to leave the room. They were eventually caught by the staff's brilliance.

And when the light finally faded, the summoned undead followed and disappeared back into nothingness.

[Eh?]

"Amazing."

"It took you only an instant to rid me of my companions?! Kuakakakakaa!! What was that?!"

"The last line you uttered is one that I would like to return to you."

"And what exactly is that supposed to mean?"

"Hahaha! This staff is a divine artifact that possesses the ability to cause any and every sort of undead to ascend to the heavens. And so, by that logic, you too should have been influenced by its effects. Why exactly are you still here?"

Jean coughed out clot after clot of blood as he spoke. His face had paled to the point where he himself almost looked like he'd already become a member of the undead.

[Jean!]

"Here. Shoulder."

"Thank you kindly."

"Kukakaka! I see now. The item you possess allows you to use a high level, area of effect purification spell by consuming your own life force. It looks like getting rid of all those high level undead did quite the number on you! Kukakaka!"

Damn, Jean must've completely exhausted himself. Casting ascension on Andy alone was already enough to make him feel pretty tired. The spell he just cast probably probably drained him of everything he had. It might've even cut into his life span.

[I'll heal you r-]

"Do not bother. The damage I sustained comes not from injuries but rather plain exhaustion."

"This then."

"Thank you."

Fran pulls out a stamina potion and hands it over to Jean. Stamina potions were a bit special in the sense that they didn't recover HP, but instead directly targeted and recovered one's life force.

"So what will your next move be? It appeared as if your trump card had no effect on me."

Why did it have no effect anyways? The staff was supposed to get rid of all undead unconditionally. He shouldn't be fine. Is he not an undead? No, that's not possible, his status says that he's a lich.

"As powerful as it may be, that tool of yours has no effect on a being of my caliber!"

That might in fact be true. Liches are practically thought of as kings amongst the undead. There's always the possibility of the item not working simply because they're in a class of their own.

"Kuhahaha! Tell me, how does despair feel?"

The lich continued its incessant verbal assault, but it had little effect. We were far from hopeless.

“We cut him, we win.”

[Yeah, that’s the way!]

Fran closes the gap between her and the lich and disallows him the chance to summon anymore undead.

“Ha!”

“Kukakakaka! How pointless!”

What? The sword’s just passing through him? None of his skills were supposed to do anything like that...

“Raah!”

[Fire Arrow!]

Fran tried to use an elemental blade attack while I tried to use magic, but neither had any sort of effect. Both passed right through him, just like initial slash. At first, I thought that the lich was just an illusion or something, but that’s impossible given that he’s already used magic. And on top of that, he even counterattacked the moment our strikes passed right through him.

“Gah!”

[Middle Heal]

All he did was throw a single punch, but that was enough to halve Fran’s HP. He was definitely more than just an illusion.

Wait, how did he do that much damage with only 134 STR? He’s supposed to be weak as hell, and it’s not like he used any skills or magic either. How the hell did he manage to chunk Fran so badly?

[There’s got to be some sort of trick to this.]

“Nn. Strong.”

There has to be something in his status page that I’m missing. Or actually, his status page could be wrong altogether. Everything would totally check out if he had some type of appraisal jamming skill.

[What a pain in the ass.]

(What now?)

[He’s definitely using some sort of trick to phase through our attacks, so we might be able to steal it from him if we use Skill Taker, but...]

I can’t really affirm the specifics because Appraisal isn’t working properly.

[Jean, have you tried that skill of yours?]

(It does not work. Soul Seeing eyes has no effect on the undead.)

[Have you thought of any sort of strategy then?]

(I haven’t anything on the level of a strategy, but I would like the two of you to buy me a slight bit of time if possible.)

[Will buying you time let us beat this guy?]

(I cannot say for sure, but I would like you to trust me on this.)

Well, it seems like he’s got something up his sleeve. He isn’t all that confident about it, but we’re already grasping at straws here, so might as well go along with it.

(Got it.)

[We’ll end up stalling for you if we just fight it anyways, so why not.]

(You have my thanks.)

An hour passed.

We were still fighting against wave after wave of undead.

“What’s the matter? Are you tired already? You’re starting to get stiff.”

“Not... yet!”

“Woof!”

“Splendid! How splendid! I cannot wait until I see the look on your face when all that hope takes a sudden turn and transforms into despair. You will make for fine undead! Kukakakaka!”

Our attacks have yet to show any effect on the lich. We’ve tried all sorts of things during our battle with the undead he summoned; we threw as many spells and attacks his way as we could, but each and every single one would just end up slipping right through him.

The only reason we were able to last this long in the first place was because he was just toying with us. He himself wouldn’t do anything at all, and he even let Fran heal up when necessary.

It seems that he’s more interested in crushing our spirits and turning us into undead than defeating us – which makes sense. I’m pretty sure a necromancer as powerful as Jean could probably even end up turning into a Lich.

But thanks to that, we were able to buy Jean enough time to complete his preparations.

“Come on, why’d you stop moving? I’m going to summon even more undead at this rate.”

“Woof woof!”

Urushi fired a Dark Lance at the lich, but as expected, it was to no avail.

“Yes, yes, exactly. You must keep attacking at all times. Now, why don’t you show me what it is you’ve been plotting this whole time?”

“Will definitely hit you.”

“Kukakakaka! Go ahead. If you can, that is.”

I was already down to about half my mana. The same applied to Fran, Urushi and Jean as well.

[Still not done yet, Jean?]

(Just a second longer! And for certain this time!)

After repeating a phrase he’s said time and time again, Jean finally reveals why he had us stall for time.

A loud explosion rings throughout the hall as it begins to shake with the intensity of a magnitude 5 earthquake. What the hell!? Did someone drop a bomb in the dungeon or something?!

“W-What in the world are you doing?!”

The lich’s usual, haughty attitude vanishes in an instant.

“It seems to have worked.”

“You did that?”

“T’was a subordinate of mine.”

It looked like what Jean was waiting for this whole time was for one of his subordinates to destroy something.

“T-The Phantom Flame is losing its magical power!? M-My forlorn desires, they’re disappearing!!? Arghhhhhhhhh!!!!!!”

[What’s happening to him?]

“He should be growing weaker as we speak. His strength stemmed from his ability to draw from the dungeon’s mana supply, and let us just say that I’ve arranged for it to be removed from right under his feet.”

[You should've just told us you were doing something like that.]

"My apologies. I would not have been able to destroy it lest you distracted the lich."

"And?"

"Deceiving one's allies is how one truly begins to deceive the enemy. I've no idea as to whether or not he possessed any sort of skill that would allow him to read minds, so I felt it better to hide it from you."

"You bastard! You shall not be forgiven! I no longer have any need to turn the lot of you into subordinates! I'll crush your limbs and have you tormented by the undead until you wish to have never been born! I refuse to let you know peace, even in death!!"

CHAPTER 79

GRUDGE

The destruction of his dungeon's innards caused the lich to flare up in rage.

It was kind of weird. His face was well, literally just a skull, but I could still somehow tell he was angry.

[He's probably got a few more openings now that he's gotten weaker.]

"Nn!"

"What's with that look on your face? Are you truly so foolish that you would even consider defeating me to be a possibility? Very well, I shall crush your hopes immediately. Use that appraisal skill of yours and behold."

The lich's status page warped as he deactivated a skill and allowed me to properly appraise him.

Basic Information

Race: Lich
Undead
Magic beast
Dungeon Master
Lv. 71

Stats

HP: 4863
MP: 7467
STR: 934
VIT: 737
AGI: 666
INT: 2369
MGC: 4312

DEX: 1207

Skills

Skills

Incantation Shortening: Lv Max

Wind Magic: Lv 7

Appraisal Jamming: Lv 5

Dread: Lv 9

Fear: Lv 7

Regeneration: Lv Max

Space/Time Magic: Lv 7

Cursed Words: Lv 6

Instant Regeneration: Lv 4

Spirit Control: Lv Max

Hell Magic: Lv 8

Ghost Magic: Lv Max

Resistance to Mental Abnormalities: Lv 9

Life Energy Detection: Lv 6

Life Energy Absorption: Lv 7

Water Magic: Lv Max

Greater Water Magic: Lv 3

Close Quarters Combat: Lv 7

Earth Magic: Lv Max

Greater Earth Magic: Lv 3

Mind Reading: Lv 4

Poison Magic: Lv 8

Fire Magic: Lv 6

Magic Detection: Lv 7

Magic Absorbtion: Lv 7

Dark Magic: Lv 5

Ignore Incantation

Resistance to Abnormal Status

Undead Strengthening

Unsealable

Magic Manipulation

Unique Skills

Grudge Absorption

Grudge Conversion

Anti-Appraisal Camouflage

Extra Skills

Greater Undead

Principle of Impurity

Titles

One who seeks revenge

One who bears many sins

Equipment

Robe of Resentment

[Shit... Make sure you stay focused, Fran.]

“Nn!”

Mother fucker! Why the hell was he that strong?! We were too naive, god damn. He could probably kill us in just a split second if he really wanted to.

That said, him showing us his status page allowed us to see why our attacks weren't actually hitting him.

(Master, I've come to understand why we were unable to deal him any damage. He's using his space/time magic. Specifically, he's likely using Dimension Shift.)

Dimension Shift seemed to be allowing him to temporarily move his body elsewhere. It was obviously a skill that ate up a huge amount of mana, so you normally wouldn't be able to keep using it, especially consecutively. The Lich, however, had the ability to completely nullify his incantations on top of a huge mana pool, so he could pretty much use it at will without experiencing any sort of drawback.

“Overload: Summon Undead”

The lich cast a spell and summoned a large number of undead. Unlike before, he wasn't

planning to just wait around and mess with us anymore; he promptly brought forth 10 different legendary skeletons, each armed with a formidable, magic weapon. Thankfully, none of them were able to release their latent potential, at least.

“Torture them to death!”

All ten immediately began rushing us. Though the number of undead summoned was actually less than it was before, each individual was of a higher quality, and they even seemed to be decently coordinated.

“Summon: Greater Undead”

He even summoned an army of zombie bugs to go along with the skeletons, all of which immediately began to swarm Fran.

[Fuck! Go away goddammit!]

I tried to smack them away with wind magic, but they seemed not care and they gradually began to bog down Fran with nothing but sheer numbers.

“Hellblast!”

“Venom Bullet!”

“Gravitational Pressure!”

And to top things off, the lich even started firing high tier spells at us one after another without any sort of pause. Its ability to ignore incantations was doing it wonders.

“Guh!”

We erected magical barriers and tried our best to defend against his relentless assault, but we couldn’t stop Fran from gradually accumulating damage.

[Fran! Dodge instead! Don't bother trying to block his attacks!]

"Nn."

"Kakakaka!"

Fran tried to dodge the incoming spells, but all the undead refused to get out of her way. Her HP soon began to plummet; I wouldn't be able to heal her in time.

"Summon: High Tier Undead."

Jean tried to give us a hand by summoning a subordinate of his own.

"Take the stage, Stephan!"

Sweet! Jean managed to summon an undead that was at least as powerful as the lich's legendary skeletons. It had some sort of appraisal block skill, so I couldn't appraise it, but the magical energy emanating from its body seemed to indicate that it was a solid B level threat.

The skeletons Fran was up against seemed to respond to it with surprise, and as a result, their movements temporarily dulled.

That said, the undead Jean summoned didn't actually appear to be all that strong. It was about the size and shape of a human child. If it didn't have pitch black holes in place of eyeballs, and I hadn't witnessed Jean summon it, I probably never would've thought it to be an undead at all, in fact.

"That's... How exactly did you managed to summon *that*?"

The lich was so shocked by Jean's summon that it stopped attacking.

The thing Jean had managed to summon was the Soul Eater. When the hell did he manage to get his hands on that anyways?

The Soul Eater was supposed to be one of the lich's subordinates, but for whatever reason, it was now obeying Jean instead.

The only two skills you actually need to take control of an undead are Spirit Control and Ghost Magic. That said, the Lich had more mana than Jean and its Spirit Control was higher level too, so it didn't really make sense for Jean to be able to wrestle control from it, regardless of how talented he was.

"I am a necromancer, you know? I've plenty of countermeasures when it comes to the undead."

Apparently Stefan was actually the name of the Wraith that Jean was planning to use against the Soul Eater. His plan for said wraith was pretty easy to see right through, given that it only had three skills: Undead Resist, Absorption Resist, and Erosive Fusion.

The first step was obviously to have the wraith get eaten by the Soul Eater. A normal undead would end up getting absorbed by the Soul Eater right there and then, but Stephan's skills would allow it to survive and then take control of it through the use of its Erosive Fusion.

Apparently, Jean had the Soul Eater eat Stephan last time he came here, but he thought the plan had ended in failure since the Soul Eater didn't seem to show any signs of being affected.

However, Stephan hadn't actually been defeated. Instead, he managed to slowly erode away at the Soul Eater over the course of several years before finally taking control of it.

When Jean finally made his way back to the dungeon, Stephan had telepathically informed him of what had happened.

"Kukakaka! How marvelous! Very well, I shall allow you to serve me after I end your life. I will make use of that mind of yours in order to fulfill my dearest wish."

“I refuse.”

“You have no choice in the matter.”

Fran and I managed to group up with the Soul Eater and eliminate about half the skeletons while Jean bought us time with his conversation.

The Soul Eater was ridiculously powerful. It almost seemed immortal so long as it was up against the undead. The moment it touched any of them, it'd immediately absorb every last bit of their mana. They couldn't attack it without carefully plotting their next moves first.

The lich's attention had all been focused on Jean, so it had yet to move. The skeletons weren't doing as hot either, so it was pretty much now or never.

[Jean, I'm going to seal off his ability to use space/time magic. Can you use the staff? If that'll push you too hard, then w-]

(I don't mind.)

[Alright. Activate it whenever, we'll match your pace.]

(Understood.)

I begin to focus on the lich's movements as Jean raises his staff to the sky once more.

“Aidoneus' Blessing, commence activation!”

“That staff again? It won't work on me. Are you planning to use it to annihilate the skeletons? Please do, I'd like for you exhaust all your life energy. Your corpse will be in better condition that way.”

“Aidoneus' Blessing, grant peace to those unable to achieve salvation!”

[Skill Taker!]

Fuck yeah, it worked! I managed to steal his Lv 7 space/time magic!

“Sing them a melody of love, hate, and resentment!”

“It’s pointless I sa—w-wait! What!?”

The lich started to panic as his body was enveloped by the staff’s light.

“Impossible! Impossible I say! I refuse to fall in a place like this!”

The lich screamed in agony from within the light; it had yet to vanish.

“Guaaaaaaaahhh! I’m getting purified!! My urge to exact revenge... is fading away!
Arghhhhhhhhhhh!”

The lich was as strong as expected, it was taking quite a bit of time to ascend because of how strong it was... Or at least that was what I’d thought.

A bit of time passed, and the light faded away.

But the lich did not.

[Shit! The bastard managed to hang on.]

In fact, there was something strange going on with his body.

“Arrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrraaaaaaagggggggggghhhhhhhhhh!!!”

An incredible amount of magical energy was flowing into the lich from its surroundings, likely due to the fact that it was a dungeon master.

“Something’s... wrong?”

“He’s absorbing grudges from the undead spirits around him.”

“Meaning?”

Jean was too busy lying flat on the ground to answer Fran's question; he was completely out of breath. Though we gave him another stamina potion to down, he still didn't seem all that well. And so, Stephan had answered the question in his place. The fact that he was basically fluent made me feel as if he really was a human being.

"The Principle of Impurity is allowing him to absorb the malice bore by undead spirits around him and convert them into power. I personally am not affected as a result of my resistances, but I can't say the same for any of the other undead, nor what remains of the Furnace of Malice."

The Furnace of Malice that Stephan was referring to was the thing he destroyed earlier. As implied by its name, it used malice produced by the undead as fuel and converted it to magical energy. The malice that the furnace ran on didn't really end up going anywhere after the furnace had been blown up, so it was pretty much just drifting around the dungeon.

Absorbing all that malice had managed to stop the lich from being purified by Aidoneus' Blessing, as the two effects basically ended up counteracting each other.

The lich's unique and extra skills allowed it to convert all of the absorbed malice into its own power.

"KUKAKAKAKAKAKAKAKAKAKAKAAAA!"

[So uh, is it just me or does he look a bit weird right now?]

"My guess would be that he absorbed more than he could handle. All that malice ended up turning into what is effectively a ball of nothing but fury and bloodlust. The lich itself has probably even lost the ability to think altogether."

That seems just a bit bad. I mean like, won't he end up going berserk or something?

[All we need is one more push with Aidoneus' Blessing.]

"That's an impossible request. My lord's life wouldn't last."

[Can't you use it or something then?]

"Named items can only be used by those that they approve of. I'm afraid my lord is the

only one with said approval...”

Shit, so only Jean can use it? God damn.

Given no other choice, I try firing a bit of magic in the Lich’s direction, but it ends up getting repelled by a black, miasma-like aura.”

“Arrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrraaaaaaagggggggggghhhhhhhhhh!!!”

Ooookay, this isn’t looking good. All the hatred and curses that the lich sucked started to leak out of its body and overflow. Its black aura began to expand even further. I can tell at a glance that we were in a pretty bad spot.

“The malice he’s gathered is so concentrated that it’s began to take physical form. Be careful not to get swallowed up, any living things that do will likely perish immediately.”

Don’t have to tell me that. Shit, what do I do? The Warp Feather wasn’t going to work. Space/time magic probably wasn’t going to work either. The Lich was unsealable, so I probably couldn’t just dump him somewhere sealed off with space/time spells.

Stephan hurried over to where Jean was and lifted him up off the ground.

“I’ll take care of My Lord, though I can’t say I’m capable of doing the same for you...”

[Come on! Lend us a hand here!]

“Sorry.”

Both Jean and the Corpse Eater were swallowed by the dark miasma as the Lich’s malice continued to surge and grow.

[Fran, deploy your magic barriers in front of you at full strength! Make sure you double layer it with purification magic!]

“Nn!”

[Shapeshift!]

I change my form to that of a large shield. The material that it's made of is rather thin because I had to stretch myself, but that didn't matter. I needed to make sure none of the miasma touched Fran. After changing forms, I overboosted the sorcerer skill and immediately created a magical barrier with all my strength behind it.

[Guuuuhhhhh!]

The magical barrier creaked under the force of the lich's malice; it looked as if it was about to break at any given moment.

My durability rapidly began to plummet as the barriers warped more and more out of shape.

"Mas...ter!"

[Fran!]

The malice was far too powerful. Fran's barrier was slowly being twisted out of shape as well; there was too much pressure on her for her to last. At this rate, she was going to end up getting swallowed up by the miasma.

Shit, what do I do? I still have a few points remaining, so I can probably throw them into something right now. But what? Do I point physical barrier? Purification magic? Fuck, what do I do!?

Wait, I still had a skill I'd yet to use, a skill that'd strengthen both my barriers and ability to purify.

[Fuck it, let's go! Latent Potential Release!]

A huge wave a magical energy suddenly surged from within me.

CHAPTER 80

OP SYSTEM ANNOUNCER

I ended up using Latent Potential Release in order to fight back against the Lich's out-of-control negative energy.

Magical energy had began to overflow from within my body. Sweet! We might actually be able to do this!

Wait, wait, holy shit! My durability is going down twice as quickly as it was before! I'm probably not even going to be able to last five minutes if this keeps up.

<You are currently in a perilous situation. Action is advised.>

Huh? Who the hell was that?

<I am... _____. Error encountered. Unit name has been deleted by creator. Unit name is currently blank.>

Er, that's not really what I meant. Like, are you a system announcement kinda thing or something?

<Correct. The system announcement feature denoted by unit name "Master" is one of many tasks within the realm of my capabilities. The effect of the "Latent Potential Release" skill has temporarily restored me from the "frozen" state.>

There's still quite a bit I want to ask, but this isn't the time for it. I have to do something to get us out of this shitty situation.

<Unit name "Master" will be destroyed in 279 seconds. The status quo dictates that the possibility of the enemy unit ceasing the emission of its thoughts within the

aforementioned time frame is gauged to be 13%. The possibility of unit name “Fran” losing all function is gauged to be 91%.>

Holy crap. I should probably put points into my magical barriers or upgrade my purification skill so I can protect her. Argghhhh, which one should I pick? Shit! Hey System Announcer, which do you think is better?

<Neither of the two previously proposed concepts will provide a solution. Thus, neither choice is recommended.>

So both ideas suck?

<Correct. Both options result in scenarios with approximately a 70% chance for unit name “Fran” to cease all function.>

Then is there any sort of better option?

<Yes. Would you like to proceed with an interaction that would result in a probability of unit name “Fran” retaining function?>

Yes please!

<Please grant an override. Access to your skills is required.>

S-Sure. Do whatever you want!

<Access acknowledged. Initializing interactions.>

The system announcer seems to know much more than me, so I’ll guess I’ll just leave it to her. In fact, leaving everything to her feels like second nature, for some odd reason.

<The space/time spell “Quick Zone” has been activated.>

The spell’s effect was to speed up one’s perception, so its activation caused everything to start to move in what seemed like slow motion.

Oh wait, I get it now. The spell’s use bought us quite a bit of time, so we’d be able to think our strategies through. Good job, system announcer.

<Top priority has been placed on preserving unit name “Fran.” “Fran” will now be safeguarded in the most optimal possible manner.>

<Five self evolution points have been used. The “Shapeshift” skill has evolved into the “Transform” skill.>

Woah, she’s using self evolution points?! Er, well, I guess I did tell her she could do whatever she wanted.

Thanks to that though, I only had 20 self evolution points remaining.

My body abided by the system announcer’s will and transformed. My overall shape stayed pretty much the same; I remained a shield, but a part of me seemed to expand and wrap itself around Fran’s frame. It looked like Transform allowed me to alter both my shape and mass as opposed to just the former.

I didn’t just protect her from attacks that came directly from the front. My body also flowed into and filled any gaps in the Black Cat set she wore. I basically ended becoming a piece of armour myself.

Becoming her armour allowed me to do more than just protect her from physical attacks, it also allowed me to deploy a 360 degree magical barrier around her, thereby bolstering her defenses even further. The combination of my overboosted magical barrier and her own ended up creating quite the decent shield.

Oh shit! This is just like A**do! I'm not a sword or spear; I'm actually more like a gauntlet-type weapon now than anything seeing as how I'm attached to her by the hands and all that.

<Computational power has dropped as a result of the transformation and barrier deployment. Five self-evolution points have been consumed. "Thought Division" has evolved into "Parallel Processing." Computing power has been restored.>

Oh fuck it, I don't care anymore! Use as many points as you want, as long as it works!

<Shortage of self-evolution points detected.>

Well yeah, no shit! Look at how many you just used!

<Six self-evolution points have been consumed. The Appraisal skill has been raised to its maximum level. Lacking prerequisites for the "Eye of Empyrea" skill. The skill acquisition process has been temporarily suspended.>

So it seemed that she maxed out appraisal because she knew it could evolve. That said, I didn't seem to meet the requirements for said evolution.

<Attempting to access the divine realm... Success. Bibliotheca fetched. Access lost; exchanged for information regarding the "Eye of Empyrea" skill. Building "Eye of Empyrea." Success.>

The divine realm? The hell is that? Is that supposed to be where God lives or something like that? And a bibliotheca is a library... right?

Though I had many questions, I refrained from asking any of them. It'd probably be better for me not to get in her way for the time being.

<"Eye of Empyrea" activated. Legendary Skeletons successfully located. Activating "Transform.">

I had to admit that Eye of Empyrea was extremely effective. It allowed me to see through the Lich's overflowing malice. As a result, I developed a much better grasp of my surroundings.

Several thin strips of metal shot out from my body and homed in on the remaining legendary skeletons.

The metallic strands flew through the storm of curses and malice. They looked like they would sever at any given moment, but each was encased in a magical barrier that protected it from harm.

Every single skeleton had its magic stone pierced through with ease. Latent Potential Release had raised my attack power quite a bit. Since the steel fibres were still counted as a part of my blade, I was able to absorb all five remaining magic stones in an instant.

Holy shit! The system announcer is OP as all hell!

<The total value of all magic stones absorbed has reached 5521. Rank up achieved. 55 self-evolution points obtained. Total remaining self evolution points: 64. 18 self-evolution points consumed. The "Body Split" skill has been maxed. The "Accelerated Thought" skill has been obtained.>

Huh, so she maxed body split too? I guess it was necessary for that other new skill I just got.

<10 self-evolution points consumed. Upgrading "Body Split" to the superior rank. Interfering in skill evolution process... Failed. Iterating... Success. "Multiple Body Split SP" acquired.>

The System Announcer upgraded body split before I even got a chance to figure out what it did at its max level, not that I really mind. I was just a bit curious about its effects is all.

<"Multiple Body Split SP" activated.>

The System Announcer then proceeded to summon five of me in human form. I expected them to step up front and help us block the incoming attacks, but they ended up standing behind us instead. In fact, they even ended up using us as a shield.

<"Parallel Processing" initialized. "Accelerated Thought" initialized. Preparations for high speed computation complete. Analyzing... success. 8 self-evolution points consumed. Flame Magic has been elevated to Lv 5.>

The system announcer decided to end up leveling flame magic, but she only leveled it to 5 instead of maxing it out, probably because she just wanted the skill that unlocked at Lv 5 or something.

<Commencing activation of the Flame spell "Inferno Burst.">

All five my clones join me as we activated and released the spell simultaneously. All six golden fireballs converged into a single projectile. The spell was supposed to be one that traded range for incredible power in the first place. The system announcer amplified the power of its output further by taking advantage of its calculations.

The super concentrated flame blew a hole through the lich's miasma, and for a moment, allowed me to see its body. The attack had managed to create an opening, but the surrounding malice had begun to rapidly fill up the hole we created.

Shit, we better attack it soon! We might even be able to defeat it if we do!

<Suggestion rejected. If the lich is attacked, its grudges will likely go even further out of control and create a massive explosion. The chance of this occurring is gauged to be 89%.>

Woah, seriously? I guess we better do something else instead then.

<10 self-evolution points have been consumed. The “Skill Taker” skill has been upgraded to the superior rank. Upgrading the “Skill Taker” skill has reset its cooldown. “Skill Taker SP” activated. Success. The “Unsealable” skill has been obtained.>

Wow, that’s dirty. Hmm... I wonder if Skill Taker SP can steal extra skills as well...

<Activating the space/time spell: “Dimension Jump.”>

Oh, I get it now. Stealing the lich’s unsealable makes it so that we can seal it away using space/time magic or something like that.

A moment later, we teleported out the hall.

CHAPTER 81

GOODBYE SYSTEM ANNOUNCER

We were assaulted by high pressure winds the moment we were teleported out of the Lich's room. We successfully managed to escape the dungeon's interior, but since this was a floating island and all that there wasn't exactly anywhere we could go. As a result, we were now free falling from high up in the sky, way above the clouds.

Fran's eyes were closed and her body limp, but luckily, it seemed that it was just because she passed out. She still had half her HP remaining, and she seemed like she was just fine. Her complexion was pretty normal too. I decided to use heal and purify on her just in case though.

[You still alive, Urushi?]

"Woof."

It looked like Urushi was doing alright. Wait a second, I can both see and appraise him despite the fact that he's still in Fran's shadow! I guess that must be another one of Eye of Empyrea's effects.

Like Fran, Urushi was also missing a fair chunk of his HP. That was it though, neither of he or Fran seemed to be suffering from any status abnormalities.

<Warning. Unit name "Master" only has 35 seconds worth of durability remaining.>

Oh, system announcer chick! Thanks a tonne, we wouldn't have been able to get ourselves out of that mess without you.

<Terminating the "Latent Potential Release" skill. Unit with temporary name "System Announcer" will once again be deprived of its abilities.>

The system announcer's voice seemed to waver the moment she declared that Latent Potential Release was coming to an end.

Wait, so what happens now? Are things just going to go back to normal for you or something?

<Correct. Unit with temporary name "System Announcer" will revert to being restricted to the relaying of information and translation.>

There's still a bunch of stuff I want to ask you. Will I be able to talk to you again if I use Latent Potential Release later or something?

<Unlikely. The acquisition of the Eye of Empyrea skill and the use of abilities far beyond usual limits has caused damage to areas that would have otherwise been developed further in the future. The chance of the unit with temporary name "System Announcer" being awakened on any given activation of Latent Potential Release is gauged to be approximately 2%. >

Huh? Wait, hold on then! There's a bunch of stuff I want to ask!

<Unit name "Master:" Unit with temporary name "System Announcer" thanks you. No. I thank you.>

The system announcer suddenly switches to using pronouns to address itself.

<Not even god would allow me to exist in my normative form. My creator erased me and transformed me into naught but an empty vessel. Though it lasted but a transient moment, I am glad I was able to be of assistance. I truly thank you, master of mine, but you must be warned. The path you shall take in the future will be harsh. The God of Wisdom is unlikely to confer upon you its blessings, for...>

Her voice suddenly cut off.

System announcer? System announcer!?

<...>

[Err... I guess you can't talk anymore.]

I still wanted to ask you about a whole bunch of stuff, but whatever. Don't worry about it.]

[Ya know, looked to me like the system announcer itself was never more than just a fragment of something else in the first place. Using Latent Potential Release allowed you to use it or whatever, but every last speck of it is gone now cause you had to use abilities way beyond your limits.]

[So I really won't ever be seeing her again?]

[Nah, she's probs never going to show up again.]

[Then I guess I won't be able to ask for her help next time we're about to get screwed.]

[Pretty much, yeah. By the way, you really should be checking how many magic stone point thingies you have left.]

[Oh, alright, sure. W-Wait! What the hell!?!]

Some dude was like casually talking to me telepathically. Who the hell was that!?

[Why do I feel like I've heard your voice before?]

Oh yeah, I remember now. That's the same voice I heard right when I reincarnated.

[Who are you anyway?]

[Wellll, I was planning on telling you eventually anyways. And I was planning on meeting up with you in about a monthish, something around that, iunno. Well, telepathically meet up that is, if you count that. Buuuuuut, eh, whatever. Might as well tell you now minus all the pretentious nitty gritty junk anyway.]

[You sure sound laid back...]

[Welll, that's cause we don't really count as strangers n stuff anyway]

[Whatever, whatever. Might as well say it. My name is....]

“Master, it appears that you are alright!”

Oh god damn it, what kind of timing is that supposed to be...?

The one who interrupted my conversation was Stephan. The small, child-like zombie was still holding a passed out Jean in its arms. I mean, I was glad that they were still alive, but couldn't they have waited like half a second?

[Hey, you still there?]

[—]

And, he's gone... He didn't even tell me who he was.

Damn it, I'm really curious now. Who or what is he? Is there another me inside of me or something? Do I have dissociative personality disorder? Does his soul dwell within mine or something? I mean, I am a sword, so I can't say I'd be surprised. Man, I really want to know, but I can't figure it out and just thinking about it isn't helping. Argggggg!

Damn it. Thinking about it isn't helping at all. You know what, he didn't seem like an enemy, so I'll just save myself the stress and not think about it until he shows up again.

Speaking of thinking about things, whatever was the System Announcer? I guess she might've been a soul or something, but she seemed a lot less organic than that. Honestly, my first guess was that she was kind of like the stuff you'd normally find in Sci-Fi novels, you know, like an android or super-advanced, support-centered AI or something. I was pretty sure of it too, but then she started saying all that stuff about being deleted by her creator and God denying her existence and whatnot. Damn it, thinking about her isn't helping at all either.

Whatever, you know what? Let's save the thinking for later.

“Are you alright?”

Stephan falls in line with me as we continue to plummet. Jean looks fine, but I can't help but find the sight of him in Stephan's arms a bit weird. I mean, it wasn't really either of their faults. Seeing a child was carrying an adult princess style was just weird.

"Is Fran okay?"

[Yeah. She's just passed out.]

A loud crashing sound suddenly filled my ears as I finished telepathically transmitting my thoughts.

[Woah!]

I turned around out of surprise, only to see that the floating island from which we just escaped had split itself in two. Black light erupted from each and every single crevice as the whole floating island began to crumble.

Holy crap. We definitely would've died if we stayed inside the dungeon. Thank God the system announcer chose to get the hell out.

Large chunks of rock started to fall from the dungeon's foundation. The whole structure had started to collapse.

"The dungeon's core was likely destroyed by all the malice the Lich emitted. As a result, the entire structure will soon disappear."

[Do you think that the rocks falling from it will end up making it to the ground? If they do, they might end up causing quite a bit of damage.]

"Most likely. Everything associated with the dungeon will disappear, but the rock that made up its foundation was likely something that was there to begin with."

That's pretty bad... The chunks of rock breaking away from the dungeon were so big that they could've easily removed any given village from the map altogether.

[I'm leaving Fran to you, Urushi.]

“Woof!”

I had Urushi revert to his usual size before placing Fran on his back. His fur was well... natural fur, so it should've be fairly comfortable.

After making sure that she was secured in place, I shot myself downwards and descended below the clouds in order to survey our surroundings. Whew, luckily there weren't any towns or cities; we near the bottom of the mountain that bordered the Reidos Kingdom.

On second thought, it wasn't actually all that lucky. The mountain probably wouldn't be able to sustain any large scale hits, and the same went for the forest nearby. Regardless of where it landed, the giant falling monoliths were going to cause something on the scale of a natural disaster. And to make matters worse, there was a pretty big river right around where one seemed like they it was going to land. Having the giant rock smash a river into oblivion would probably be just a little bit bad.

Alright, what do?

As of right now, there were two big problems. That is, two massive pieces of rock had broken off from the floating island. One was going to land inside the forest about halfway up the mountain. The other was probably going smack in the middle of the river that ran down the mountain.

[Yeah, uh... I guess better make sure the river doesn't get screwed up.]

To start things off, I dove straight towards the descending slab whilst firing off a few Inferno Bursts. Each iteration of the spell bored itself a pretty big hole, and as a result, it was more effective than what I otherwise would have done if I'd chosen to use Earth-based magic instead. After verifying my success, I started casting wind magic and increased the air pressure. As a result, the falling monolith broke into four smaller pieces.

[Hell yeah, it worked!!]

I cast another round of spells, and this time, managed to break the four shrunken stones into five even smaller subsegments each. Well, I say that, but each of the “small pieces” was still 20 odd meters across.

[Alright, that should be about small enough.]

The next skill I activated was dimensional storage.

[One... two.... three... four...]

I began storing the monolith’s shattered pieces one by one. My newfound mastery in the art of space/time magic allowed me to figure out the exact size of my dimensional storage, and boy, did it have a lot. I should’ve still had a whole gym’s worth of space, even after storing a bunch of giant ass rocks.

The only issue was that I wasn’t really sure how I was supposed to dispose of them later, but whatever, I’ll figure it out in due time.

[Alrighty, that’s the river taken care of.]

By choosing to protect the river, I inherently neglected the forest. The second monolith crashed into the mountainside with a loud smash and completely obliterated most of the woodland. Whew, seeing that really made me glad I managed to save the river.

“Woof woof woof!”

“Are you alright, Master?”

Both Urushi and Stephan caught up to me as I resumed my descent.

It looked like everything was settled, and so, I finally breathed a sigh of relief.”

[I’m fine. What about you guys? Did you get hit by any of the debris?]

“Woof!”

“We’re fine.”

“...Wait”

“Woof?”

[You sure you’re alright, Stephan? You’re all glowy.]

“It appears that I’ve reached the end of the line.”

[Huh? What? Why? What happened?]

“This body of mine was one of the dungeon’s many creations, and for that reason, I cannot escape its fate.”

[Weren’t you supposed to be one of Jean’s summons?]

“Indeed I am, but at the same time, I am not. My body was created by none other than the dungeon master.”

His hands became translucent, and his body had started to give off particles of light.

He was starting to disappear.

But despite that, his face was plastered with a content smile.

“Please, take this.”

[Is that... a diary?]

“Indeed. It’s a journal filled with experiences. You will find it a worthwhile read.”

[Wait, hold on. Who’s diary is it, exactly?]

“That’s something that will immediately come apparent should you read it.”

Again, he smiled.

“At last, it’s finally come time for me to be at peace.”

[Wait a second, Stephan! Hold on!]

“Master. Please convey one last message for me. Please tell my Lord that... I would like to thank him. I would like to thank him for freeing the souls trapped within that labyrinth, our souls...”

Stephan touched his forehead to Jean’s one last time as his body finally faded away.

[Stephan really didn’t ever stop smiling, did he?]

“Woof...”

Oh yeah, that reminds me, that one mysterious guy, whoever he was, mentioned something about my magic stone stat right?

Might as well check it.

[W-WHAT THE FUCK!?!]

General Stats

Name: Master

Wielder: Fran

Race: Intellegent Weapon

Attack: 572

MP: 523/3550

Durability: 614/3350

Magical Conductivity: A+

Skills

Appraisal: MAX

Appraisal Jamming

Transform

High Speed Regeneration

Self Evolution: Rank 11

Magic Stone Count: 2361/6600

Memory: 100

Evolution Points remaining: 18
Self modification (Superiorized)
Telekenesis
Lesser Telekenesis Amplification
Telepathy
Lesser Attack Increase
Intermediate Wielder Status Increase
Lesser Wielder Recovery Up
Lesser MP Increase
Intermediate Memory Increase
Knowledge of Magic Beasts
Skill Sharing
Sorcerer
Eye of Empyrea
Unsealable
Space/Time Magic: Lv 7

Unique Skills

Principle of Falsehood: Lv 5

Superior Skills

Way of the Sword SP
Skill Taker SP
Doppelganger Synthesis SP

[What the hell?! Holy crap, I'm missing more than half my magic stone points!]

I mean, the skill hadn't ranked down or anything, but my magic stone count was abysmally low. I pondered the reason for a second, only to immediately think of Latent Potential Release. It was probably because of that. I decided to try appraising the skill again. I recently leveled appraisal up to max, so I should be able to see skill descriptions in more detail.

Latent Potential Release
Rarity: EX
Attack + 800
Magical Conductivity increases 3 stages

MP + 3000

Cost: 1000 magic stone points upon invocation, and 15 per second thereafter throughout the skill's activation.

Unleashes the user's latent potential. The precise bonuses provided depend on the user's latent potential. As the skill forces the user beyond his/her limits, it will cause the user's life force to whittle over time. The skill also requires additional compensation. Compensation differs from user to user.

Holy fuck, just activating it flat out eats a thousand magic stones worth of points...? Well, I guess it did save our asses, so I can't really be complaining.

Yup, I'm definitely not regretting any of that all.

I'm not the type to complain, nope I am not.

I really hope I can rank up some more soon...

CHAPTER 82

MAKING POTIONS

The first thing we decided to do after escaping the dungeon was head right back over the Jean's lab.

"So Stephan has passed on, I take it?"

[Yeah. He went with a big smile on his face.]

"Marvelous. Passing on in such a manner is the best possible thing that can happen to an undead."

Jean woke up, but he still didn't seem to have recovered from all those activations of Aidoneus' Blessing. He ended up collapsing just a few moments after he finished speaking. He was still conscious, but he didn't bother getting up, probably because he was still feeling exhausted.

The only other thing he bothered saying was that he wanted to eat curry, and well, given the shape he was in, I couldn't exactly say no.

Fran reluctantly agreed to sharing some with him as well.

Jean told us we could stay in the guest room for as long as we liked, so we decided to take a few days to rest up before heading out again.

[Hey uh... are you sure you don't mind us taking all these items? You hired us, so they should be yours by all rights.]

"I mind not even in the slightest, for they are of little use to me. Do with them as you please."

[Alrighty then.]

And that settles that, mission complete. We were rewarded with quite a bit more than what I was expecting. Jean generously handed over a whole 400k Gould alongside half

the loot we found throughout our dungeon adventure.

The most notable items we were given were the two dropped by the Legendary Skeleton: the magic sword Deathgaze and a cloak by the name of Aidoneus' Mantle. Their stats were as follows.

Name: Deathgaze (Magic Sword)

Attack: 880

MP: 600

Durability: 400

Magical Conductivity: B+

Skills

Instakill: The item has a 3% chance to instantly kill any foe it cuts."

Name: Aidoneus' Mantle

Defense: 40

Durability: 600/600

Effects

STR + 10

VIT + 20

INT - 20

DEX - 10

The mantle's effects seemed pretty good, but we couldn't really use it. It's the sort of equipment you'd give idiots that don't know how to do anything but use brute force.

A few of the other items caught my eye as well. Namely, we picked up an odd, S shaped flute-looking thing that seemed to be made out of a goat's horn and a small but pretty ring.

Name: Horn of Impact

Effect: Playing this horn whilst channeling magical energy through it will occasionally cause a shockwave. However, there is a 4% chance that the horn will break upon use.

Name: Ring of Nightmares

Defense: 8

Durability: 200

Effect: Wearing this ring induces nightmares.

The hell... The Ring of Nightmares is clearly a cursed item no matter how you look at it. I can't really see it having any use unless you want to give it to someone you don't really like or something like that.

We were also given: a High Grade Life Potion, a High Grade Mana Potion, an Intermediate Grade Explosive Potion, an Undead Luring Incense, and a Bottle of Voodoo Poison.

The potions weren't all that significant. Er, well, that's technically not true. They're the kind that'd cost you a pretty penny or two at a shop, but my repertoire of skills and spells made it so that they're not really necessary for us. I took them anyways though, seeing as how it's not like taking them is going to cost us anything.

Fran and Bernardo walked in right as I finished checking over all the loot.

They didn't really seem natural next to each other, so I was struck by a weird sense of dissonance, but whatever.

[What's up?]

"Nn. Learning potion making"

"She said she wanted to learn how to make them , so here we are."

"I will, teach her."

Another skeleton enters the room.

"This here is Peter."

"Nice to, meet you, I am, Peter."

It seemed that this Peter guy, er, skeleton, was capable of both alchemy and pharmaceutical practice. Jean's subordinates sure do have varied skills.

[Isn't making potions supposed to be some sort of like super special skill? Are you sure it's okay for you to casually teach her how to make them?]

"Yes, my part, of exchange."

[Exchange?]

"Curry, recipe."

Hey! You guys just totally did that deal without my permission!

Wait, is Jean seriously willing to let Fran learn how to make potions in exchange for something as insignificant as the recipe for curry? Holy crap, he's really gotten hooked on it.

"Naturally, I will, not spread, the recipe."

[Eh, it's alright. I don't really mind.]

It's not like it's something I came up with in the first place anyways, and I am pretty curious as to what kind of spinoff recipes the people of this world will make if it gets popular.

"Don't have to share anymore."

[Oh, so that's what this was all about...]

"Nn. Very important matter."

Now that I think about it, I did have the skills necessary to make potions. I just never actually tried doing anything with them.

[Would you mind if I joined it? It looks like it'd be pretty fun to give it a shot.]

"I do, not mind."

And so, we ended up deciding to learn how to make potions, but...

“Tired.”

[Already!?!]

Well, it’s not like I don’t get where she’s coming from.

Fran isn’t exactly the type of girl that’d be able to sit around and grind a bunch of grass to the point where you could extract its essence.

“Urushi, here.”

“Woof?”

“Here.”

“Woof!”

She eventually just decided to give up and pass the task off to Urushi. The big, vinyl coloured wolf grabbed executed the action with ease by grabbing the mortar with his front paws and moving the pestle with his mouth.

“Woof. Ruff ruff woof.”

[Wow, you’re pretty dextrous, Urushi.]

“Woof!”

Alright, I better put in more effort too!

[Oryaaaa!]

“Woooof!”

“Go, go.”

Fran cheered us on while sitting off to the side drinking juice.

After we finished grinding up everything, we moved onto the next step: extracting its essence. To do so, we needed to mix the contents of our mortars with water, pour the resulting brew into a flask-like object and boil it.

Normally, I'd expect this to take about an hour, but waiting around for that long didn't really make the whole process feel like a specialized craft or anything.

[I'm going to try devising some sort of spell to accelerate the process.]

can use magic when I'm cooking to speed things up and improve the taste. I'm pretty sure the same principles apply here too.

It shouldn't really be too big a problem even if I do mess up because I'm only going to screw around with half the batch anyway.

I distill the necessary water with water magic, control the flames with fire magic, manipulate the pressure using wind magic, and speed it all up using space/time magic. Heh, perfect.

"Master, cheating?"

[I'd prefer if you called it using your head.]

The result of my efforts was a pretty decent life potion. Man, I'm so talented that I scare myself sometimes. That said, the potion Peter made through regular means was still of a higher quality.

You know, I might actually be suited to regular old boring tasks like cooking and mixing potions. Leveling these skills up takes time and effort, but, thinking about what you do can let you mess around with the result. I'd say that this was probably worth looking into. I guess I'll go around collecting recipes and stuff next time we go to town.

You know, thinking about it, Fran really is a cat. She got bored of what she was doing,

so she not only stopped, but even ended up going outside to play instead. Urushi, on the other hand, was totally her bitch; he followed her orders almost desperately.

Peter taught me a few recipes after we finished up our life potions. In total, I learned how to make ten different kinds, with the more notable ones being Mana Potions, Antidotes, and Spirit Potions.

I didn't really think a mere curry recipe merited this much in return, but both Fran and Jean insisted that there was still more to be owed. I mean, I guess it's fine since they're in agreement about the terms. They're both curry enthusiasts, and that isn't much of an issue in and of itself, but their passion for it has gone to terrifying heights if you ask me.

"Master, sir, My Lord is, calling for, you."

Jean asked me to see him in his room right after meal time. There, I found him looking a bit healthier than before.

[How're you feeling?]

"Fuahaha, better, to say the least."

[Great. Anyways, what did you need?]

"Ah, yes, why don't we get down to business. Have you perhaps read the diary Stefan left you?"

[Not yet.]

I mean, he did hand it off to me, but I figured it'd be better for Jean to read it first.

"Would you perhaps mind lending it to me?"

[I was thinking that it should belong to you in the first place.. I wasn't planning on reading it till you were done anyways.]

"Thank you."

[Don't worry about having to rush through it or anything. We were planning to stay a

few more days anyway.]

“Understood, and thank you.”

[No probs.]

Jean gently took the diary from me and slowly turned its cover.

It's really thick, so I doubt he'll be able to finish it in a day. Hmm... what should I be doing the next couple days anyway? I guess there's always making potions, but I'd like something else as well... Oh, right! I should check all my skills and stuff.

CHAPTER 83

INSPECTION TIME!

General Stats

Name: Master

Wielder: Fran

Race: Intelligent Weapon

Attack: 572

MP: 3550/3550

Durability: 3350/3350

Magical Conductivity: A+

Skills

Appraisal: MAX

Appraisal Jamming

Transform

High Speed Self-Repair

Self Evolution <Rank 11 | Magic Stones: 2361/6600 | Memory: 100 | Evolution Points Remaining: 18>

Self Modification (Superiorized)

Telekinesis

Lesser Telekinetic Amplification

Telepathy

Lesser Attack Increase

Space/Time Magic: Lv 7

Skill Sharing

Intermediate Status Increase (Wielder)

Lesser Recovery Increase (Wielder)

Eye of Empyrea

Unsealable

Lesser MP Increase

Knowledge of Magic Beasts

Sorcerer

Intermediate Memory Boost

Unique Skills

Principal of Falsehood: Lv 5

Superior Skills

Way of the Sword SP

Skill Taker SP

Doppelganger Synthesis SP

I was thinking of checking Appraisal, Transform, Space/Time Magic, Eye of Emyprea, Unsealable, Way of the Sword SP, and Doppelganger Synthesis SP in particular since they were all either new or now a much higher level.

Fran and Urushi both leveled up quite a bit, so their stats rose too.

General Stats

Name: Fran

Age: 12

Race: Beastman (Black Cat Tribe)

Job: Magic Warrior

State: Bound to Contract

Status Level: 37/45

HP: 419

MP: 347

STR: 235

VIT: 184

AGI: 229

INT: 162

MGC: 196

DEX: 156

Skills

Espionage: Lv 3

Court Etiquette: Lv 4

Sword Arts: Lv 3

Way of the Sword: Lv 6

Blink: Lv 4

Cooking: Lv 1

Insect Killer

Vitality Manipulation

Goblin Killer

Mental Stability

Demon Killer

Determined

Directional Sense

Night Vision

Good at Stripping Others

New: Undead Killer

Inherent Skills

Magic Convergence

Special Skills

Black Cat's Divine Protection

Titles

Match for a Thousand

Insect Killer

Lord of Dismantling

Recovery Magic User

Goblin Killer

She who Slaughters

Skill Collector

Dungeon Conqueror

Giant Eater

Demon Killer

User of Flames

User of Wind

Lord of Cooking

New: Undead Killer

New: Skill Maniac

Equipment

Black Cat Set (Body Armour, Gloves, Shoes, Earring, Cloak, Belt), Power Bracelet + 1, Sacrificial Bracelet, Skull Necklace

Her level's gone up by 12, and her stats have risen accordingly. She hasn't really gained

any skills, but her Way of the Sword's leveled up, and by quite a bit at that. It's probably because of the fact that I have Way of the Sword SP.

The part that interests me the most is her level. Does the 37/45 mean 45 is her cap? Or will she evolve when she hits 45? If it's the latter, then she might not be too far away, which is good.

The other thing that really stood out to me was the fact that she got more titles.

Undead Killer: A title bestowed upon one who has slain over 300 undead on a single battlefield.

Effect: Activates the Undead Killer skill.

Skill Maniac: A title bestowed upon one who has obtained over a hundred skills.

Effect: Increases the rate at which skills improve.

Skill Maniac seems pretty decent. I guess it means that Fran will end up growing even more quickly. Wait, does anyone else even have this title? Like holy crap, you need a hundred different skills...

The only new equip she got was the Skull Necklace that Jean gave her. I do have a few accessories like the Bracelet of Protection and Bracelet of Poison Resistance lying around, but, it doesn't look like you can equip more than a single accessory in the same spot if you want their effects to activate. I guess that means you have four main accessory slots: left wrist, right wrist, neck and fingers. I'm not really sure if accessories are equippable to legs, we should probably find out later or something.

The next thing to do was to check over Urushi's stats. He used to just be a level 1, but now he's gained a whole 17 levels. His stats are already higher than Fran's.

But now that I think about it, he was level 1, and only managed to gain 17, whereas Fran was much higher but still gained 12. I guess he needs more exp per level than her or something.

General Stats

Name: Urushi

Race: Darkness Wolf (Demon Wolf, Magic Beast)

State: Normal

Status Level: 18/50

HP: 630

MP: 791

STR: 321

VIT: 270

AGI: 409

INT: 272

MGC: 498

DEX: 251

Skills

Darkness Resist: Lv 8

Darkness Magic: Lv 2

Sense of Smell: MAX

Espionage: Lv 7

Fang CQC: Lv 5

Fang Arts: Lv 6

Shadow Dwell: MAX

Shadow Travel: Lv 5

Air Jump: Lv 8

Fear: Lv 4

Vigilance: Lv 6

Presence Concealment: Lv 6

Regeneration: Lv 5

Deadly Poison Magic: Lv 1

Blink: Lv 5

Muffle: Lv 6

Spirit Magic: Lv 5

Life Force Detection: Lv 7

Resistance to Mental Abnormalities: Lv 6

Poison Magic: MAX

Echolocation: Lv 7

Roar: Lv 8

Shadow Slip: MAX
Dark Magic: MAX
Night Vision
Great Poison Fang
Automatic HP Recovery
Automatic MP Recovery
Immune to Poison
Body Alteration
Magic Manipulation

Unique Skills
Prey Absorption

Titles
Kin to the Sword
Kin to the God of Wolves

I could actually see the effects of his unique skills and stuff in more detail now because my appraisal's level went up.

Prey Absorption: Rarity Level 9. Absorbs a part of the power of anything it consumes. Stats are boosted upon level up to reflect every thing absorbed.

Kin to the Sword: A title bestowed to one summoned by a special sword.

Effect: He who bears this title will be linked to the sword and can communicate with its wielder.

Kin to the God of Wolves: A title bestowed upon to any of the Wolf God's kin that possess its strength.

Effect: Intimidates other wolves. Is linked to the God of Wolves and can communicate with it.

I get why he has the whole Kin to the Sword thing, but, where did that Kin to the God of Wolves title come from? Actually, thinking about it, my handle has this wolf-like engraving on it, and I did find myself in the Demon Wolf's Plains when I first gained

consciousness. I might have some sort of connection to that Fenrir wolf thingy. Maybe I should go back to the plain and put a bit more effort into investigation.

Alright, that's done. Next I guess I'll go back to checking over my skills. I never did go over what the set skills Magic Resist, Accelerated Thought, and Parallel Processing did.

Magic Resist was well... magic resist, but it did have a drawback in that it also resisted healing magic. It's a set skill though, so we can get rid of it whenever, which is pretty convenient.

Accelerated Thinking seemed like it would be convenient in battles.

Parallel Processing was the most impressive of the bunch. It was a better version of Thought Division that allowed me to think about 4-5 different things at the same time. If I got used to it, I'd probably be able to cast five different spells simultaneously. That said, I'm not that confident about using it since I only just mastered Thought Division. Fran will probably have a really hard time with Parallel Processing though, seeing as how Thought Division on its own is enough to give her headaches.

Alrighty, the next thing to go over would probably be the skills that only I could use.

Appraisal's pretty obvious. All that really happened was that it got raised from Lv 7 to max. It now shows skill rarities and provides a bit more details in its evaluations.

Transform: Rarity level 6. The user can change the shape of their body. The extent to which one's size and shape can be changed vary based on the amount of magical power used and the extent of the user's imagination.

Transform was a bit different than what I was expecting to be. I tried doing what the System Announcer did with the threads and the armour, but I couldn't really make anything that didn't end up all deformed. I could only do a few less impressive transformations. For the time being, I was more or less limited to becoming a bigger sword or a longer spear or something. I'll have to put in a bit of practice to get the skill to do what I want.

Eye of Emyprea was a skill that reinforced all skills that made use of one's eyes. Unsealable was quite literal and made it so that I couldn't be sealed.

Space/Time magic was also pretty self explanatory. I've already used Dimension Shift, Quick Zone, and Dimension Jump, but that wasn't all it was limited to. There was also Dimension Sword for offensive purposes and Slow Shield for defensive purposes. The magical discipline had a lot of powerful and fun to use spells.

As for the superior skills...

Skill Taker SP: Rarity level SP. Steals any skill of choice from the opponent with a success rate of 100%.

The number of days that must be elapsed before the skill can be reused is equal to the skill's rarity level multiplied by the skill's level. Extra skills are as skills with a rarity level of 20. The skill's range is 10 meters.

Hell yeah! I can even steal extra skills now! This broadens our horizons a tonne. The only problem is the fact that the cooldown's increased drastically. If I use it on a max level extra skill, then I won't be able to use it for a whole 200 days. I'll have to be more careful when using it. On the plus side, I'm now able to steal skills from the same person multiple times – not that I think there'll really be any chances to make use of that ability.

The last skill I wanted to look at was Doppelganger Synthesis SP.

Doppelganger Synthesis SP: Rarity level SP. This skill allows one to create multiple copies of their own body through the use of magical energy. The user is able to adjust the duration for which the copies persist. The shorter the duration, the more powerful the copy. Each additional copy halves the abilities of all copies. The amount of time that must be elapsed before this skill can be reused is equal to the number of copies created multiplied by the activation time of each body further multiplied by 24.

It looks like I can create a whole bunch of copies now, but each will be kinda weak if I do. If I create a single body that lasts 10 minutes, all its stats will be above 200. It'll have all my skills as well, but with each 2 levels lower than normal. In terms of adventurer ranks, I guess I'd say that it ends up somewhere in the C range. Making multiple really doesn't help because it halves each's ability... They're not that great as swords either because my attack and magical conductivity both plummet. It probably worked when the system announcer used it because I was in the latent potential release state, and my base stats were way higher. I figure there's a chance that unleashing my latent potential made it so that their skill levels didn't drop either.

Well, I guess all that means is that it's not something I'll be using much, especially in battle. It might be a bit useful when for stuff like scouting or acting like a decoy or something though. Oh, and I guess I could use it to pretend to be Fran's guardian or something as well.

Anddddd that's it I think. I'm going to need to practice using each and every single one of those skills in order to actually get value out of them. I have to make sure I know when I should and shouldn't be using them too.

Alrighty, that's everything checked over. What should I do next? I hope Jean's done with the Journal.

CHAPTER 84

SIDE DIARY

“There you are, Master.”

[Have you finished reading it over?]

“I have. It would be best for you to give it a read as well.”

[Hmmm... alright, but it seems pretty long.]

The diary’s almost completely filled. It looks like there’s a couple year’s worth of entries in there.



My body’s been like this for almost three years.

Today, I decided that I would write a diary. I don’t really know why I decided to, I just kinda felt like it. I don’t think I’ll be able to write an entry every single day, so I’ll try for once a week.

It’s possible that someone might end up seeing this diary some time in the future. So, person, whoever you are, I’ll write you a little bit of a self-introduction so you know more about me.

I guess the first thing I should write about is my current location. To be honest, at first I didn’t really know exactly where I was, but I did know the kind of place I was in.

I was on a giant floating rock, one of the Reidos Kingdom’s secret experiments. As for me? I was just one of their lab rats.

I didn’t really know exactly what kind of experiment they were running here, but it looked to me like it was something to do with the military.

They used me as a part of a necromancy experiment. Again, I didn't really know many details or anything like that. All I knew was that I wanted to die. And I wasn't saying this like it was some sort of passing thought. It's something I was brooding over for a long time. I wanted to die.

You could easily tell that the researchers didn't really see us as fellow human beings. To them, we were guinea pigs, nothing less, nothing more. It's as if they didn't understand the meaning of the words "humane treatment."

But yeah, one day a lot of bad things happened, or should I say good things? I'm not really sure which it is. Either way, a lot of things happened, and I was deprived of everything that made me human.

I can still recall what happened that day in vivid detail. That day, they killed me. After cutting off both my legs and my right arm in a series of experiments, they decided to dispose of me by using me in one last, large-scale experiment.

They used me, a live necromancer, in an experiment. Well, actually, I say that, but I was a pretty weak necromancer. You could barely call me one. The only spells I could use were the Lv 1 spells I picked up in my time here in this facility. Either way they were going to do it. They were going to inject me with curses, grudges, and malice in order to try and turn me into an undead while I was still alive. Messed up, right?

But whatever. Nothing mattered anymore. I was going to die.

They chained me up and placed me in a hallway with a giant magic circle drawn inside of it. Countless curses were poured inside of my body. They used a barrier alongside a sort of special technique to make it so I couldn't reject the curses as they came to me, and so, having found a body to possess all room's malice rushed towards me and filled me in an instant.

And that was when it happened.

I couldn't tell what Goddess was trying to do that day. Was she trying to show me mercy? Or was she just playing a prank on me? I couldn't tell.

A dungeon core suddenly appeared in the room I was in.

There was a bunch of writing on it, but I couldn't tell what any of it meant back then.

What I did know was that the core could've appeared anywhere else. But it appeared here, right in front of me.

I still don't know why it appeared then and there. Was it just a coincidence? Was the Goddess of Chaos just messing with me? Or was she pitying me?

I didn't know, and I still don't to this day.

All I knew was that the dungeon core acknowledged me as its master. It powered up my body and allowed me to absorb every single last bit of malice that came at me. And so, the ritual transformed me from a living, breathing human being to nothing more than an undead creature.

I was supposed to be turned into a Zombie Mage, a lower class undead. But even then, it was much more powerful than I'd ever been in life.

But the fact that I became a dungeon master and the fact that I absorbed every single last grudge and curse made me transform into something else altogether.

I somehow ended up becoming a Lich. At first, I'd just thought I became a Skeleton, but I soon realized that I'd become a Lich. My transformation granted me more than twenty different skills and spells.

There was actually a span of three days between the dungeon core appearing and me waking up. I don't actually know what happened during those three days, but what I did know was that all of the humans on the island had somehow been overwhelmed

by the undead and exterminated. Learning that fact made me freeze in shock for a few moments.

Some would go as far as calling the transformation I underwent an evolution, one of necromancy's ultimate goals.

But I think that's pretty much as far from the truth as it gets.

My sense of morality seemed to have left with my humanity. My heart felt like it'd been wrung dry, and so, I tried to quench its thirst. I went around the island and destroyed any of the researchers that'd turned into undead.

But it wasn't enough.

Hatred continued to vent from every last fibre of my being.

It hurt. I couldn't help but hate humans so much that it hurt. I felt the urge to completely ruin their lives, to destroy everything and anything they've ever loved. I want to kill every last one, to wipe their very species off the face of the Earth.

Revenge.

I wanted revenge.

Vengeance was the only reason for which I now existed.

I wanted revenge.

But I didn't.

Becoming a Lich was something along the lines of a miracle. I'd finally been released from my life as a lab rat. I wanted to spend the rest of my days in peace, to quietly live

on and enjoy my second chance at life.

I didn't want to kill.

The malice within me, however, did. It refused my pleas and told me to do but a single thing.

To kill.

To seek vengeance.

It forced me to action. I couldn't stop myself.

Hey, you, the person reading this diary. I don't know who you are or what kind of person you are. I don't know if you're an enemy or an ally, a good or bad person. But regardless, I hope that you will tell the world about what happened here. Please, inform the world of the Reidos Kingdom's sins and liberate our souls from the fetters of misery.

April 7th, 3619

Today's the day I start my diary. Nothing notable happened, besides me deciding to write this, of course. Yeah, that's pretty much it. I mean, this is a whim and all that.

So uh... yeah, I guess I'll just quickly gloss over what I did today.

To start, I did the usual thing and enlarged the dungeon a bit. Then, I made a few undead. I still haven't touched the bodies of the researchers, nor the bodies of my fellow lab rats. I think I'll focus on making subordinates and accruing GP for the time being.

Oh, yeah, by the way, GP stands for Goddess Points. I didn't know either until recently. I guess they're called that because you offer them up to the Goddess of Chaos or

something like that.

September 29th, 3619

I've finally managed to get over 10k GP! I should be able to get the dungeon to mass produce undead now.

I also tried to write down some stuff about the dungeon itself, but it doesn't seem like I'm able to. I can try all I want, but my hands will refuse to move whenever I try writing about the dungeon's core.

It seems like there's some sort of mysterious power that's preventing me from doing so. It's strong enough to stop a Lich, so I guess it's probably the Goddess or something.

November 4th, 3619

I used a bunch of GP to make a strong subordinate. The facilities left behind by the researchers seemed to have a bunch of stuff used in the summoning of undead, so I procured it all for myself. One of the items therein was called the "Hero's Bone." I don't really know if it actually belonged to some hero or not, but whatever.

What mattered was that it was actually just as powerful a material as its name signified. Using it allowed me to summon a Fighter class Legendary Skeleton. It even had an extra skill by the name of "Latent Potential Release."

I tried pitting myself against it in a mock battle, and it did pretty well. I'm glad, I've managed to get myself a strong companion.

December 31st, 3619

The year has come to an end. This is the fourth New Years I've experienced as a lich. I tried making some special New Year's bread and soup. I can't actually eat it, but making let me enjoy the festive mood.

Hmm... I wonder what kind of holidays undead are supposed to celebrate anyway...?

It won't be long until I get enough GP for my next goal. I can almost taste the Undead Creation Studio I'm about to get my hands on. I'm really looking forward to it, I'll be able to make even more undead now.

February 27th, 3620

I finally managed to get my Undead Creation Studio. Dungeons sure are strange. The studio just magically appeared where I wanted it to without so much as a delay.

The studio was really nice, and a significant powerup as well. The dungeon is now capable of creating many different kinds of undead that it wasn't capable of creating before. I'm getting better at necromancy too, so I've gotten a grasp on how to summon a bunch of different kinds of undead as well.

The only issue is that I'm not really sure what kind of undead I should be making.

The undead the dungeon makes have magic stones inside of them, and most of the mana will ultimately end up going back to the dungeon, but they're kind of weak.

The undead that I make, my kin, don't have magic stones. They have fake souls inside of them instead. They end up being much stronger, but, they don't really help the dungeon's mana situation much at all. Furthermore, their cores are pretty much made up by grudges, so they're all kind of aggressive.

I could always just buff up all the undead that the dungeon churns out if I used Spirit Control, but doing that for a few hundred of them is honestly too much of a pain for me to bother with it.

Alrighty, I guess I'll do a fifty-fifty split then.

September 18th, 3620

It seems that the floating island's path started to stabilize, it's route has gotten fairly regular. I can try to point it in a direction too, but that takes a lot of mana...

I'm kind of stuck in the middle of a bunch of different countries, but whatever, that's fine. I'm not all that far away from the Reidos Kingdom, so it should be pretty easy for me to get revenge on them. That is why I exist, after all.

April 14th, 3621

The dungeon's gotten a lot bigger, so my options seemed to have expanded as well. All I can say is that all the dungeon's more advanced facilities look awesome.

Two of them in particular have really caught my attention. The first was a huge barrier that covered the entire dungeon. The second was something that converted malice into magical energy. Both cost 300k GP, so I won't be able to get them for a while.

September 11th, 3621

I've finally finished expanding the dungeon. It now spans a total of ten floors, and it can influence the whole island plus another fifty meters or so.

I don't think anyone'll be able to land on the island with ease so long as I beef up the air units a bit.

I think I'll focus on creating more undead and adding traps for now then, I guess.

May 20th, 3622

Today marks the first time I've made a unique undead in a long time. I used 10k GP to make myself a Soul Eater.

Apparently it gets stronger by eating the undead despite the fact that it itself is also a member of the undead. It looks like another run of the mill zombie for the time being, but I'm kinda curious as to how it'll end up turning out.

I decided to let it roam around in the labyrinth as it pleased for the time being.

October 10th, 3622

Today, I'm going to be writing quite a bit for the first time in a while.

Someone's finally come to the dungeon! My first invader! At first, I thought he came on the Reidos Kingdom's orders, but apparently that wasn't the case.

I mean, there was only a single person after all, so I guess it'd have to be an adventurer of sorts. That said, he was quite formidable despite only being a lone necromancer. He was riding a Griffon Skeleton — something that even I was struggling to summon!

The undead birds and bats I summoned tried their best to keep him out, but the Griffon proved too strong and managed to break through them.

The forest pretty much did exactly what I'd planned though. It had an illusion spell on it, so it confused the adventurer and made him get lost.

There were undead at every single turn, so he started to get exhausted.

He tried to retreat, so I had a few of my more powerful undead go after him. The Soul Eater had gotten pretty strong too, so I sent him as well. My undead beat out the necromancer's, but he still managed to escape.

Too bad. I wanted to capture and talk to him. If he was the likeable kind, I might've even made him into one of my subordinates.

Oh well, whatever. Either way, he managed to get me to smile for the first time in what felt like years. In fact, I think the smile I had on my face today was the biggest I've ever had in my life.

I still remember what he said, "Fuhahaha! What a formidable dungeon! Never have I considered that I, Jean Dovy, would have to escape from a haunt!"

He wasn't making fun of me, right? I think it might've even been the opposite, in fact. He was paying homage to my dungeon as his tattered robe and skull-like accessories

fluttered in the wind. I see. I get it now. That's what it means to be a true necromancer.

What about me then? I mean, I'm a lich and all, but aren't I kind of lame? I should be more like him.

Alright, it's time for a change in attitude. I'll try to be a bit more conscious of how I speak.

"Behold, for I am a Lich, Ruler of the Undead! Kukakakakaka!" Hmm... that sounded pretty good didn't it? Er, I mean. That sounded quite magnificent, did it not?

Splendid. I feel naught but marvelous. Kukakakaka!

This is going to take some getting used to.

October 28th, 3623

I finally managed to save up 300k GP, so I immediately set up the Furnace of Malice. Actively hunting the magic beasts that ended up coming near the floating island was well worth it.

I was thinking of saving the magic stones I got so I could make magic tools with them later, but I ended up prioritizing GP, so I let the dungeon absorb them.

Even something as weak as a Lesser Wyvern nets me around 20 GP. It was well worth having the dungeon absorb my entire stock.

The furnace would absorb any malice in its surroundings and convert it all into magical energy. Linking it up with me effectively produced an infinite loop alongside an inexhaustible supply of magical energy.

April 12th, 3624

My power increases every single day as a result of the furnace of Malice. I may soon have enough power to enact my revenge upon the Kingdom of Reidos.

However, I encountered what would label a minor incident whose cause not even I could identify. The curses within this body of mine have begun to grow more powerful. It poses no problem, as I possess the ability to convert malice into power, but...

I can feel my hatred grow, day by day. I can feel resentment piling up within me and reaching heights unknown.

November 3rd, 3624

I have began experiencing moments of which I have no memory. Could this perhaps be caused by all the malice that dwells within me?

August 7th, 3625

I've noticed something strange today. The corpse eater has taken on a child's as a result of a peculiar reason of which I bear no comprehension.

I recall that it had been a ten meter tall giant just a few days prior...

It appears to have shaved off any excess body parts. Though it stands a much shorter height, its magical abilities have more than doubled in recompense.

It has taken on a form identical to that my own prior to my transformation. I cannot decipher if this has occurred because it was produced from my magic, or if it is simply a result of it being my effective offspring. How interesting.

February 24th, 3626

As I have no memory of two of the past seven days, I decided to investigate by inspecting the dungeon's video records. I cannot imagine the demon beyond the screen as myself.

What was reflected within the dungeon's records was none other than a true Lich, a being that could only be described by the words violent, cruel and brutal.

I feel that I will soon be swallowed by what I see before me.

That, however, may be perfectly acceptable by its own right.

If I am to tread upon the path of vengeance, then sympathy will be but an obstacle. My other self will surely be able to fulfill my thirst for revenge in an ever so cruel and gruesome manner .

October 6th, 3626

My memory loss continues to worsen. I can now only recall every other day.

My plan, however, is progressing as smoothly as could be. I have risen in level whilst strengthening my subordinates. I've finally amassed enough power to topple the Kingdom of Reidos.

I lack the prowess to best the Kingdom in an all out war. However, the floating island will allow my troops to catch the Kingdom by surprise. I shall invade the capital and assassinate its royal family before razing the city and turning it into a sea of undead soldiers.

Soon.

Soon, my plan will come to fruition. I need but half a year.

The world shall learn the depths of my malice.

March 19th, 3627

Today, I regained my consciousness for the first time in half a year. I've long handed

off the seat of this body's primary host to another.

But I do not mind. The dungeon has progressed as per my wishes.

There is, however, an item that bothers me. Is the path I tread truly one laid out before me by the Goddess?

It just so happens that the first day I've awoken is coincidentally a day in which the dungeon was subject to invasion. The necromancer has returned, and with him came a companion.

The necromancer's companion was an adorable girl. Her age was likely similar to that of mine immediately prior to my transformation. She possesses great might for her age; her mastery of the sword is none other than outstanding.

My eyes fail me; they are unable to keep up her motions.

It must be nice... to have companions, friends... I myself have never known the experience, for I was both born into slavery and denied the opportunity. And it is likely for that reason that she almost appeared to shimmer.

I wish for her not to perish... but I doubt my desire to be plausible.

The party cleared through the dungeon at an incredible pace. Will it perhaps fall to them?

Considering the possibility puts me in an indescribable mood. The joyful prospect of my soul attaining freedom contrasts the irritation that arises from the potential destruction of my plans.

Do I wish to be vanquished? Or do I wish to live on?

I cannot grasp the answer.

I feel as if my encounter with the necromancer and the girl must be none other than the call of fate itself...

I regret that I will be unable to witness the outcome of our encounter. And so, I wonder...

What scene will I awaken to next? No, will I even continue to awaken?

My dear reader, could you perhaps be him? Jean Dovy? Or maybe the beastgirl that traveled by his side?

If so, then I have but a single thing to say.

I'm glad that you were the ones that survived our encounter.



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